

# HISTORY OF BURNTISLAND



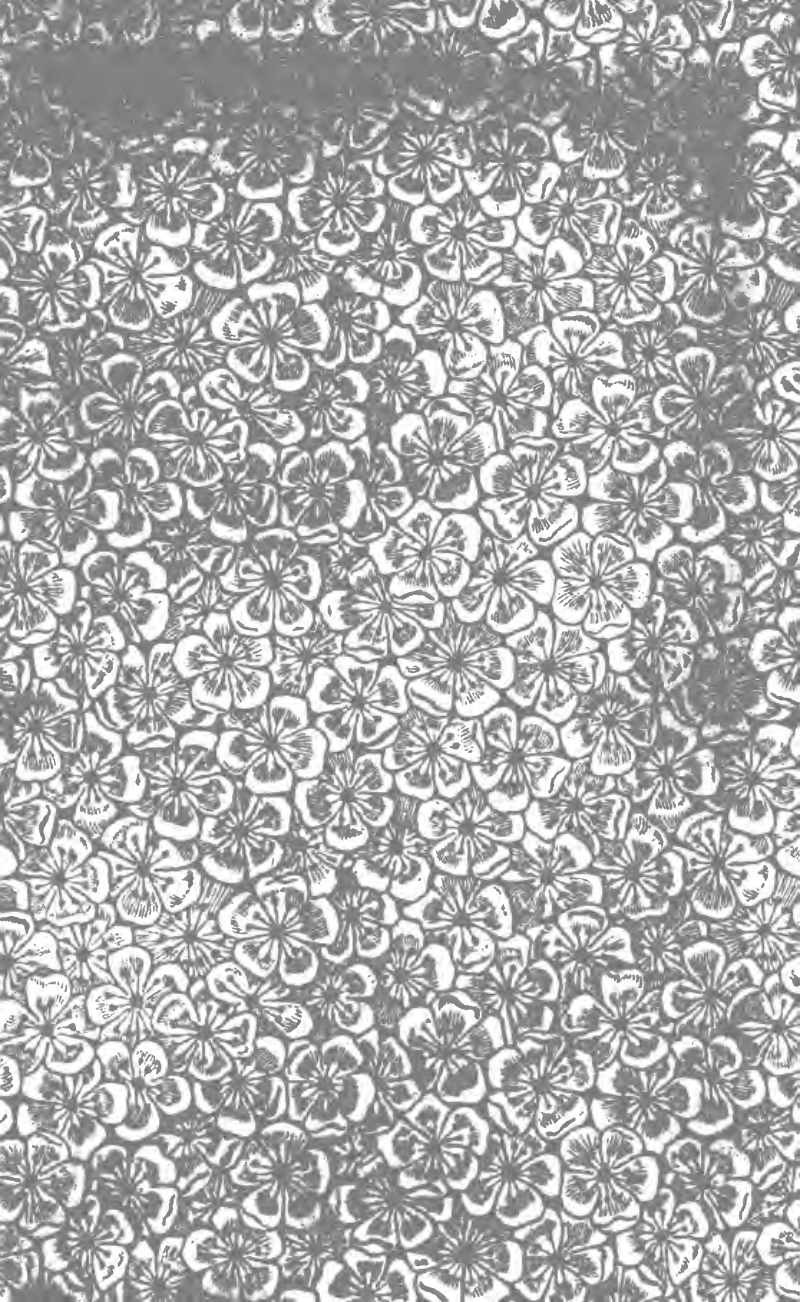
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# HISTORY OF BURNTISLAND



# HISTORY OF BURNTISLAND

SCOTTISH BURGH LIFE  
MORE PARTICULARLY IN  
THE TIME OF THE  
:: :: STUARTS :: ::

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WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

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BY ANDREW YOUNG

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## PREFACE



I AM indebted for materials for the following sketch of events in Burntisland and burgh life in early days principally to the Burntisland Council Records (for free access to which I have to thank the Provost and Town Council), the books of the Guildry and Hammermen, the report of the Commissioners to the Municipal Corporations of Scotland in 1832, Provost Speed's notes, the Exchequer Rolls, and the Privy Council Records. But many other sources have been drawn upon, which when important will be acknowledged as occasion arises.

These researches have resulted in the discovery of some very interesting facts about Burntisland and the old burgh system which, though in some instances forcing us to part with what had been considered well grounded belief, give a new and unexpected value to what was previously known and accepted but not fully understood.

Much has been written of late on the early life of important Scottish towns, mainly in relation to their guilds or trade unions, and partly because of their military history. From 1548 to 1715 Burntisland was on five occasions subjected to attacks by sea. One of these—that by Cromwell—was continued for several days, and at his time the town was completely enclosed and armed with about 40

guns. Its possession was absolutely essential to Cromwell, and after its surrender to him it endured the grip of military rule for nine years. Barntisland also affords a more than usually good pattern for the study of Scottish burgh life from the early struggles of the Reformation onwards, and especially in the seventeenth century. It was pre-eminently a Royal burgh, the particular darling of James V., who built its first piers, and had great hopes of it as a base for naval operations. Many of the most striking characters in Scottish history were associated with it, sometimes in a highly romantic manner. But above all, through a fortunate combination of circumstances, the interior of the queer, but stately, old Parish Church retains almost all the lofts and seats used by the guilds in those far away times. Three of the fronts of their galleries, with curiously carved oak pilasters and heraldic devices—originally gilded, but at present buried in layers of oak graining—still exist. On the panels of these, under many coats of paint and varnish, have up to now been discovered eighteen paintings of the insignia and symbols of the guilds. Having been employed in the restoration of these, one is forced to give an account of the work, if for no other purpose than to certify its authenticity. And the significance of the panels would be lost without an acquaintance with the customs of the times in which they were produced. With a taste for origins, and the interest everyone has in his native place, I have listened to strange stories of these parts by the old women and men natives, some of whom, over 90 years of age, died twenty or thirty

years ago. Much of what they told was well worth preserving; and so apart from a debt due to the general public, or those interested in “Auld Scotland,” ecclesiastical antiquities, or ancient trade societies, I have come to imagine that there is something I can say which the Burntisland people, more particularly, are entitled to hear. Under this impression I have spent much time (when it may be my worldly and eternal concerns should have seen me otherwise engaged) in trying to order and arrange the case of this old burgh, so that it could be more fully appreciated. No road, however toilsome, can be thought of with regret if, in the opinion of those qualified to judge, its pursuit has led to the desired end.

ANDREW YOUNG.



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## CHAPTER I.

### EARLY OUTLINES.



Cinerary urn found in preparing the foundations for the late Dr Landale's house of "The Binn."

"When I am dead and in my grave,  
And all my bones are rotten,  
Take up this book and think of me,  
When I am quite forgotten."

So runs the old request, couched in rather an Irish way. Unnumbered ages ago—an eternity before the Binn was born, and that's some time since—a strange tree fell in the sand near which it grew, and was covered with blown sand from some ancient seashore, as the robins buried the Babes in the Wood. So undisturbed was its last resting-place, and so gradual its decay, its particles filtering away with the percolation of surface water, and replaced with grains of sand—that in course of time when the sand solidified nothing

but the carbonised sculpture of the bark remained. A portion of the trunk, 4 feet 6 inches in height and 5 feet 5 inches in girth, one of the sigillaria beautifully marked with pits for the leaves arranged spirally, and with vertical moisture channels, is now standing near the entrance to Mr Landale's house of "The Binn." It was not found in the adjoining bed of calciferous sandstone, but in the same stratum in a fault at Muir-edge. In the latest volcanic period in Scotland the forces beneath burst through at Burntisland and left this layer of sandstone at an angle of 35 degrees until it reaches the foot of the east volcanic vent of the Binn. Here, on the very lip of this old volcano the late Dr Landale felt constrained to build him an house, and preparing the foundations for it in 1866 the workmen disinterred the cinerary urn depicted at the head of this chapter. It contained fragments of charred bones which are still preserved. The height is 15 inches and diameter  $12\frac{1}{2}$  inches. In a collection of these urns, in the Antiquarian Museum, Edinburgh, there is one found at Ceres very like this, the design round the shoulders being the same. Authorities assign these urns to over 7000 years ago. No doubt there was a dwelling of some kind beside this place of burial, so that even in those days there were people with an eye for a good site. Previous to the finding of this urn, in building Greenmount—another good site—a number of these urns were found together. They were much broken in excavating,

but were given to Mr Paton of Glasgow Museum. Slabs of stone had covered the tops, and Miss K. J. Kirke, Hilton, thinks there were also some flint arrow heads. I have seen an old estate map on which the place where these were found is shown as a conical tumulus, described as such. On the same map at the base of the south side of Craigkennochie there is marked "an artificial cairn probably a place of sepulture." About 50 years ago any illness in the neighbourhood of Craigholm was ascribed to the influence of this burial place, a spring near here being much used. The tumulus and cairn may be nearly of the same period, but of races with different burial customs—the cairn usually having the stone cist with unburned bones. And this is all we know of the inhabitants of this corner of Fife in prehistoric times. In the beginning of the 19th century, when a good deal of re-building seems to have been going on, in West Leven Street and the High Street near the Harbour, frequent discovery of human bones took place, grim relics, the gossips darkly whispered in the ear, of the tragic end of some over-rich traveller boastful of his spoils, or fierce seaman in some forgotten brawl. Many skeletons were also found at the Lammerlaws, supposed by some to be the remains of witches burned there, or of soldiers who perished in the siege. More likely most of these bones, had their discovery been postponed till now, would be ranked as prehistoric, from the method of their burial, or the presence of fragments of slab, cist, or urn,

which may not have been observed or not understood.

Agas afterwards, yet 1830 years ago, in the summer of 83, A.D., the Roman Governor of Britain, Agricola, "sounded the havens and explored with his fleet the north side of Bodotria" (the Firth of Forth), and, according to Sir Robert Sibbald's reading of Tacitus, "found none so commodious for great vessels as that at the town now called Bruntelin." Sir Robert in a letter to his "Honoured nephew, Alexander Orrock, laird of Orrock," published in his "Roman Ports, Colonies, and Forts in the Firth of Forth" (1711), says, speaking of Tacitus' account of Agricola, his father-in-law's sixth year of administration of Britain, "the circumstances of the mountains and woods do clearly mark out that it was at Bruntelin and the bays near it . . . that Agricola landed . . . from the Binn-end to Kinghorne the country adjacent to the coast has to this day the name of the Woods." Sibbald thought it likely that "Agricola placed a *specula* or Tower where the Castle of Bruntelin now stands; this being the largest and most convenient port for ships and easiest fortified because of the rocks on each side of the entry of it: and the rising ground on which the Castle now stands was of singular advantage, both as a *specula* for discoverie of enemies and invaders, and as a *Pharus* or height to place night-lights on (*nitidæ speculæ castillagæ*) for the seamen's better and safer guidance into the harbour."



Tacitus says that Agricola's fleets were not intended primarily to land troops, but were used mainly to follow, feed, and encourage his army, which recent writers believe would march along the coast from Stirling.

Sir Robert was an eminent physician, naturalist, antiquary, and writer, with great powers of observation, and visited personally the places he describes in his books. His active and enthusiastic nature imbibed eagerly all information bearing on Roman remains—a fascinating fever in his day—and it is this *penchant* for old-time wonders that we have to keep our weather eye on, and that firmly. He proceeds:—"This hill here on which the Roman Specula stood had an oblong camp upon it, with the *Prætorium*, that is, the Governor's Pavilion in the middle square of it, where the court of the Castle is now." He describes at length the *Castilla*, and thinks an assault on it by the Caledonians in the preceding winter was the cause of the sixth expedition. Till then there had been a division of opinion among the Romans as to the advisability of proceeding further north.

He finds "a vestige" of a British Camp on Duncarn hill, and "Upon the ascent from the East . . . there are outer and inner square camps with dykes of rough stone about them . . . ." Barbieri, secretary to Lord Elgin, in his *Historical Gazetteer of Fife*, also says Duncarn "has a fort of the Picts of great strength." I recently visited Duncarn (727 feet), but could not

trace the mounds seen by Sir Robert about 1680. It is, however, a weird and awesome scene. The greater part of the top is covered deep with thousands of whin and other hard stones, about the size suitable for building dykes. One I observed was undoubtedly cut. Were these stones collected by human agency? It is too high for a terminal moraine—an accumulation of debris torn from the sides of a valley traversed by a glacier and dropped at its foot where it ceases to be ice. A volcanic vent, in its dying throes these stones may be the last material ejected so imperfectly that they fell back and choked the vent. The lake is used by the Grange Distillery in the manufacture of *the cratur*. At the foot of the hill is the summer house of James Stewart, the survivor in the famous pistol duel between him and Sir Alexander Boswell.

A friend, Mr George Blyth, tells me that when a young man he was shooting rabbits at the edge of the loch, and having wounded one, he enlarged a hole in which it had taken refuge, and discovered, at a depth of several feet, a curious bottle, wrapped in what he describes as burned straw, probably straw black with age. It was of dark opaque glass, one end cigar-shaped like the old style lemonade bottle—the “bothimless” sort that bothered Handy Andy so much—but the neck turned at a right angle. The mouth was closed with what appeared to be wax or rotten cork. It was filled with a dark coloured very sweet wine:—

“ On Tintock tap there is a cup,  
And in the cup there is a drap.”

The wine was pronounced by a supervisor at the Grange to be very fine, and evidently hundreds of years old, as there was a deposit of an eighth of an inch on the inside of the glass. My friend has always regretted that the wine was consumed and the bottle broken. Dr Anderson of the Antiquarian Museum informs me bottles of this description were in use in Holland in the 16th and 17th centuries.

Sibbald goes on to give “an account of Orrea” (a Roman town in Fife, held by Small in his *Roman Antiquities* to have been at Cupar), “which I conjecture stood where the house of *Orrock* now stands: there have been medals found near to it . . . a military way passeth close by it called the Cross-gate . . . many antique instruments and armaments have been found near the Boroughs or Tumuli, near to where the *Practorum* stood . . . many rings were found . . . some of an inch diameter . . . some the ordinary size of a (finger) ring, all these are covered with a green crust, so it does not appear what metal they are of, some have an aperture in the side . . . and seem to have been used as Fibulae” (brooches). On page 18 he gives a drawing of a stylus or Roman pen found at Orrock.

Sir Robert had “a crap for a’ corns.” He writes “The lands of Orrock afford British diamonds of various colours, some four, some six-sided, equal

to the Bristol stones." These "diamonds" were rock crystals, and their presence in the vicinity no doubt gave rise to the old tale of sailors seeing in the night a diamond glittering in the Binn:—

“ At lowest ebb yer chafts ye’l lay,  
 As laich’s ye can, to Mary pray,  
 Atween the Kuaps and Cot-burn-dell,  
 Aboon the Green about an ell,  
   Ye’l see a ferlie;  
 Whyles blazin’ out a fiery peat,  
 Noo glowerin’ low as blue’s a slate,  
 Or flickerin’ marlin o’ the twa,  
 Syne spluterin’ like a burstin’ ba’,  
   O’ red hot iron;  
 But when the mune her chin has laid,  
 Across the Bass, she’l quickly fade,  
 Wi’ swords o’ blue, an’ spears o’ gowd,  
 The Binn she’l leave as cauld’s a shroud,  
   And black’s a whale.”

Sibbald presses on to mention a “vitriolic spring” at Orrock; chronicles a hailstorm he experienced, in the summer of 1687, at Burntisland, when the hailstones were “ $\frac{1}{2}$  an inch in diameter, the thickness of a rix dollar, and hexagonal”; and expatiates on the wonder of a horn growing out of a lady’s toe. A dangerous weapon! This vitriolic spring reminds us that there used to be a medicinal spring near Alexander’s monument, called the Wallacepaw (Well o’ the Spa—Spa well), frequented by the patients of the once famous Dr Anderson, physician to Charles I.

According to Bohn’s Tacitus, after Agricola’s great victory of *Mons Grampus* he retired south-

wards "to the confines of the Horesti" (natives of Fife). At the same time his fleet starting from the Forth or Tay circumnavigated Britain, "and returned entire to its former station." To Tacitus he described Caledonia as covered with forest, and the Caledonians as being large limbed, and having ruddy hair indicating a German origin. In fighting at Mons Grampus they used chariots and horses, the foot being armed with long swords and short targets.

The derivation of the name Burntisland has occasioned some debate. To many it presents no difficulty.—There's a little island in the harbour and the rocks look "burnt." This tendency to swallow plain English in these latitudes is common. Silverbarton, for instance. Sibbald quotes:—"Richard, Abbot of Dunfermline, on 3rd June, 1458, gave a charter to David, eldest son and heir of \*William de Orrock, of Silliebabe et Dunhern." And Silliebabe it remained till comparatively recent times. Then there's Kinghorn—King and horn. So evident! Yet the word is Kin-gorne, pronounced so by the aged natives to this day, spelt Kingorn in the 12th century, and undoubt-

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\*Members of this ancient family were bailies, tacksmen, and litigants in Burntisland for hundreds of years. The family owned Orrock previous to 1458, over 450 years since. I believe the late Captain Orrock, collector of harbour dues, was the last of his race. I recently saw a title-deed to a property of a son of the Robert Orrock hereafter mentioned as manager of the harbour works to James V., and whose house is given in the Royal Charter as a landmark. It is inscribed:—"carta Alexander Orrock ib odana parte Welton,

edly a Gaelic word. I have heard a learned gentleman lecture publicly that *end* added to Kingswood—Kingswoodend, a colloquial phrase descriptive of the position of Kingswood in relation to Burntisland—referred to the *wud* (mad) end of Alexander III. Liddall, in his place-names, gives Kinnesswood:—*Ccann—cas—ciad*—head of the waterfall of the wood, an exact description of the hill or promontory at Kingswood. Before Kingswood house was constructed there was a fine waterfall, now intercepted to feed a miniature lake about 40 feet up. Pettycur has been Frenchified as well as Englified. The *Petit corps* is said to have given the name in the time of Mary of Guise. Bleau spells it in his map of 1662 Pretticur. Sibbald writes it Prettie Kur. Petioker appears in a charter of David I., and I came across it frequently in the chartulary of Dunfermline associated with Kinghorn. The neighbourhood is studded with old Gaelic names beginning with *pit*. A few miles away are the two farms of Piteuchar, written in Gordon's map of 1645 Pittyochar.

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alias overgrange il Kinghorne Wéster 1594." Visiting Orrock lately to see about the "diamonds," and Caledonian and Roman antiquities reported by Sibbald, I found the farmhouse modern, but the lintel of the door of the old house has been preserved and inserted in the north wall. It bears the inscription "1678, A.O., E.W.—A.O., S.M., with a Latin motto, part of which is *Christus mea*. Alexander Orrock had been twice married. The family vault is here, but its exact position is unknown. There were no diamonds to be seen, but I passed a very attractive young lady with a Roman nose.

Sibbald refers to the legendary burning of fishermen's huts on the island, and a supposed attempt of the Romans to destroy the town by fire, and quotes the lines of a "native poet":—

" Brave ancient isle, thy praise if I should sing,  
The habitation of a Pietish King,  
Dreftus, who made against the Roman strokes,  
Forth's snakie arms thee to enclose with rocks,  
They often pressed to vanquish thee with fire,  
As Macedon did the sea embordering Tyre,  
But thou did'st scorn Rome's captive for to be,  
And kept thyself from Roman legions free."

Sibbald says "Brintlandt" is a place-name in Denmark, but his pet theory is that "*elen* in the old language signifies a bay bowed like the flexure of the elbow, and *brunt*, in the Gothic tongue, a fire burning—that is the Roman night light on the tower at the harbour." The name often occurs without the *d* in early Council records—Brintilun and Brint Ilun—and in this form is very like the sound given to it by old residents now. It is written variously in the early Council Records and Exchequer Rolls:—"Ye \*Brint Eland" and "Ye said Iland" (1540), "Ye Brynt Yland" (1546), "Brint Iland" (1592) "Brintiland" (1592). At first sight these seem proof positive that the name

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\*The *y* in *ye* is said by students to be the Anglo-Saxon letter *thorn*, the sound of which was that given by us to *th*. *Ye* thus was pronounced *the*. In the records in 1611 *them* is spelled *yame*. I prefer an explanation less "learned." For a long period in the Council Records *the* looks like *tye*. At this time the loop of the *h* was inverted and below the line. Examples of this appear in my *facsimile* of the cordiner's seal of cause in another chapter. In course of time the *t* was definitely dropped, leaving *ye*.

was derived from "Burned" and "Island." But the name existed previous to 1540 in the form Bertiland, probably pronounced Bert ilund. The names given above, written by Edinburgh clerks under the growing influence of English, were headings to accounts of the harbour works, which involved what we call the *green* island at both ends, and with this in their mind it was easy to change Bert ilund into Brint Iland. Speed shows that, in 1506 when the town was a Burgh of Regality under the monks of Dunfermline, the name was Byrtiland, and it is Byrtiland in the second Burgh Charter of 1585. Fernie, who had powers, quoting an old document, spells it Bertiland. Miss Blackie in her Etymological Geography gives Bertiland as the earliest form, and considers it of Scandinavian origin. The harbour would be useful for those robber Danes. "Ye said Iland" is very misleading. It is common in Fife to prefix the definite article to the name of a place:—The Raith, the Kettle, the Methil, the Elie, and even to leave out a portion of the name, as "the Dour" for Aberdour, "the Horn" for Kinghorn.

In 1538, in the Chartulary of Dunfermline, there is a grant of the fort of Wester Kingorn and the lands of "Erefland and Cunyingayrland" adjacent to it. Eref may be the Gaelic *araf*—gentle or quiet water, and *clin* a bay or haven. Cunyingayrland has been thought to mean rabbit warren (*cony*, a rabbit). It may be a form of Erefland



adapted to an adjoining portion of land at the harbour—Cyning (a King)—arland (Ereftland contracted—a haven)—Kings Haven.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE “KING’S NEW HAVEN” AND BURGH.

James Speed, one time Provost of Burntisland, who died 1867, states in his unpublished notes relating to the Royal Burgh of Burntisland, chiefly compiled from the Burgh Records, that “during the 12th century the inhabitants of certain towns were endowed by the Kings of Scotland with important municipal privileges, constituting these places Free Royal Burghs. The number of such towns at the end of that century was about eighteen; at the Union sixty-six . . . On the introduction of the feudal system into Scotland, each Royal Burgh came to be considered a vassal of the Crown. The community was authorised to administer justice, and to manage the common property. The permanent inhabitants were all freemen. These Burghs were the only places in Scotland where the lower classes of the people had anything approaching civil liberty, or where trade or the industrial arts could be prosecuted without being subject to the capricious interference of the higher nobles. Deriving their immunities from the Sovereign, the Burgesses were generally disposed to protect him from the aggressions of the

nobles or the Church. The Magistrates were judges in all civil causes, and in criminal causes except the four pleas of the Crown." These were murder, robbery, rape, and wilful fire-raising; all punishable by death. I would like to know how local authorities came to try for witchcraft, and on conviction to carry out the death sentence.

There were other classes of burghs, Baron Burghs and Burghs of Regality. The latter were instituted with permission of the Crown by monasteries on lands belonging to them, and the Abbot had the power of life and death in his Court of Regality, a power, as we have seen, not given to Burgh Courts. Burntisland existed as a Burgh of Regality in the name, as we have seen, of Bertiland or Byrtiland as early as 1506 under Dunfermline Abbey and probably long before, and after it had been proclaimed a Royal Burgh it reverted to a Burgh of Regality in 1574.

Though the name of the parish in which Burntisland lay was in the 12th century Kingorn, and gave to the Kirkton church the name of the "Kirk of Kinghorne Wester," and to the Castle the "Tower of Kinghorne Wester"—names which stuck to them for centuries—it is clear from the defensive tower being at the harbour, the town there being a Burgh of Regality with the distinctive name of Bertiland; and that James V. gave his charter as a reward to the inhabitants for "gratuitous services rendered to him and his

predecessors, Kings of Scotland"; that the town was important compared with the Kirkton. The most of the early history we have we owe to church documents, and naturally these are strongly flavoured with purely ecclesiastical nomenclature. Mr D. J. Balfour Kirke, Greenmount, in a recent lecture—"Burntisland in 1511"—rich in historical details and imagery, showed that on the testing of the *Great Michael*, King James IV. came from Falkland to meet his Admiral, "Schir Andrew Wood," who had a house at Burntisland, believed to be 34 High Street, and boarded the "greate schip" in the roadstead of Burntisland (Portus Gratiae).

The first mention of the name Burntisland in ancient documents, which I have seen with my own eyes, appears in the Exchequer Rolls, when under date 1540 and the significant heading "The New Haven," there is a long list of monies paid to "Robert Orrock, maister of the work of the Brint Eland . . . for tymmer, irn, and making the stane boit" (boat or butt)—Dry Dock—"of the said Eland." In this year King James V. made a tour of the Isles with 12 ships from the Firth of Forth. It is evident from this extract that the work must have been going on for some time, and that it was of a national character, of which additional proof is found in a petition from the Town Council in 1664 in which they specify the "peirs and bulwarks of the harbour which were erected be King James the Fyft of blessed memory." In

1541 occurs the item “the xxx day of April gevin for ane bote’s fraucht frae the Brintelind to Leitht with twa gunnis Xs.” In 1542 the accounts of the Lord High Treasurer show the expenses of the “wark at the Brintilund and the King’s grace schippis”; the materials and prices for building these; and on one occasion, as an example of many, the money “gevin to Robert Orrock for paying of the werkmen’s wageis wirkand at the Brint Iland, and for irne bocht be him thairto frae the first day of September last bipast to the xxix day of Julie instant as his buke of compt beris ijc xlv lb. xixs” —£245 19s. From other entries the ships appear to have had the finishing touches put on them at Leith.

Thus in 1540 there were being built at Burntisland for King James V. piers, bulwarks, a graving dock, and ships. Many other entries show that from this time for many years Burntisland was used as a naval base: the enemy would call it a pirate stronghold. Shipowners were encouraged to arm their vessels, and on returning with booty received a goodly share of the spoils. One or two extracts from the Exchequer Rolls to show this:—In 1545, “item. To James Lindsay, masor, quha at commands of the Lords of Counsal past to Brint Eland and thair arreistit (for valuation purposes) the Inglische schip tane in Flanders xs.” In the same year “item, to ane boy that cam frae the Capitane of the Lyon advertising that the marinaris and tymmar wrychtis wuld be gotten in the

Brunt Eland." In 1549 send to the Brynt Yland to arrest the prysis brought in be Hannis Fairlankis schip laidint witht leid and tyn." Some time previous other two prizes (French) had been brought in. In educating its citizens in this privateering, Burntisland could expect nothing but a "looking for of judgement." Habit becomes second nature. In 1573 "Capitane Halkerstone . . . Mathew Sinclair and thair complices tuke ane schip furth of the havin of Brint Iland . . . and spullyeit the greittast part of our Sôveraine Lordis Isles."

Although the originator of this activity was dead withing two short years after granting his charter, it continued, though in fits and starts, and frequent opposition. Speed gives the date of the first Royal Charter as 1541, following perhaps the note on a flyleaf of one of the old minute-books, which runs as follows:—"Charter granted be K. James the 5th beares no yther dait bot that it is given at Linlithgow the 28 year of K. J. his regne." That is 1541. I find, however, that the year was 1549, as the following entry in the Exchequer Rolls for that year shows:—"item, the viij day of Februar deliverit to the Laird of Sillebawbe" (Robert Orrock) "to give to the convent of Dunfermling for seling of the charter of Brint Eland xxxiiij £i."

The town was proclaimed as a Royal Burgh with the customary solemnities in 1568, but the charter had never been submitted to Parliament, and this gave the convent at Dunfermline grounds for in-

terference. James V. had given them lands elsewhere in exchange for the port and six acres of land, the boundaries of which began at the half-moon eastwards across the ridges of East and West Broomhill and Craigkennochie to the Baths. This was more than six acres, and it is thought that "it was on account of this excess that the Earls of Tweeddale, as succeeding to the rights of the Abbey claimed the right to exact a tax called Burgh Mail." In 1688 the Earl tried to obtain from the town £550. The commendator of Dunfermline when the town was proclaimed a Royal Burgh was Lord Robert Pitcairn, an able man and full of wiles. In 1570 he was Secretary of State to James VI., yet was one of those who arrested him at Ruthven Castle in 1582, and was banished for this. In 1574 with an admirable audacity he re-erected the town into a Burgh of Regality at the instigation of Sir Robert Melville, who is supposed to have been trying to improve his position at the Castle, or make clear his existing rights there. However, a new Royal Charter was obtained, and confirmed by Act of Parliament in 1585, which set forth that "King James the VI. having found that his ancestor King James the fifth as a reward for the gratuitous services rendered to him and his predecessors Kings of Scotland by the inhabitants of Byrtland" since its erection into a great civil community, and to encourage them to go forward in prosecuting trade and navigation, had at great expense constructed

the port called the Port of Grace,\* and disposed it and the lands adjoining thereto, acquired from the monks and abbots of Dunfermline, to the Provost, Baillies, Council and community thereof . . . renews and confirms the said charter. The dispute, nevertheless, continued between the Burgh and the Abbey, or Sir Robert Melville, whose aim was to obtain possession of the ground between his Castle wall and the harbour, so as to block up the Burgh's access to the Island and West Head, and to force the inhabitants to have their meal ground and their wood sawn at the Sea Mills. †The meal mill is still standing. The saw mill appears on a map in my possession dated 1843. These mills were driven by water wheels moved by the exit of the tide which was collected in a dam at one time extending to the road crossing to the Kirkton. What the exact legal merits of the Mills dispute were cannot now be determined.

In 1599 Sir George Home, afterwards Earl of Berwick, "was asked to accept the office of Provost

\**Portus Gratus*—a haven for which one should be thankful. The port was also called *Portus Salutus*—a safe haven. The late Marquis of Bute writes as if he thought these names had been given by the Romans.

†William Wilson, a native of Burntisland, a blacksmith with a laudable ambition, author of a volume of poetry, entitled "*Echoes of the Anvil*," has some pieces which apply locally. One of these, "*To One in the Silent Land*" (his mother), is very good. Here is one verse from his "*Castle Mills*":—

"Awa' frae the mills frae the world and its folly,  
Awa' frae our friends and cronies sae fain,  
Awa' to the land that is sinless and holy,  
To meet the long lost and be happy again."

so that his influence at Court might protect the town from the pretensions of the Melvilles." He was elected and remained Provost till 1610, with the exception of one year, 1604-5, when Sir Robert Melville, younger, who had been Provost before 1599, managed to get re-elected. But the battle of the Castle or that of the Mills had "none end at all." After every desperate bout, nothing near fatal, the opponents, like the wife "of the same opinion still," took a rest and went at it again. In 1632 the Town made a new move. The Council applied to the "Viscount Stirling" to procure a new "Royal Charter, all swearing by the extension of the right hand" to keep the matter secret. In 1633 the new charter was sent down from London to be sealed, but it was then discovered that Sir Robert was entitled to see it before the sealing. He of course raised objections to its terms, but it was confirmed by Act of Parliament 2nd July, 1633. Acts of Parliament are only made to be broken: the dispute went on as before. A solution hove in sight for a moment in 1655 when the "Sea Milnes" were to be sold. The Council met hurriedly and decided to buy them, but no bargain was struck. In 1670 Peter Walker proposes to build the town "a milne driven by horses." The Countess of Wemyss hears of this, and reasserts the Castle's rights to saw the wood and grind the town's meal. In 1683, after a nap of 13 years—unlucky number—the Council gives much favour to what seems a brilliant idea—a



corn milne driven by wind on the Lammerlaws. After an unprecedented spate of law, this too blows over, when it is once again decided (1692) that "the inhabitants are adstricted to the Sea Milnes" of the Countess of Wemyss. But the Burntislanders would *not* take it lying down. The blood of the inveterate and obdurate Celt flowed in their veins (though curiously enough you will read the Council Records of the first 270 years and find barely a single clan name). To us it seems a mere hopeless habit, like the fluttering of a bird on the wires of its cage. In 1712 an act of Parliament was procured thirling the maltmen and brewers, 23 in number, to the town's "new steel milnes" built in 1711, situated in the gardens behind 72 or 74 High Street. Up pops again that hated Jack in the Box, the proprietor of the Sea Mills, then the Earl of Wemyss, who restates his right of thirlage. After more torrents of law it was determined to try arbitration, with the result that the inhabitants are ordained to return to the Sea Mills. Even in 1849, in spite of the passing of the Burgh Reform Act, the claims of the Castle appeared to be still maintained, as I have seen a letter from a James Morrison strongly advising the Council to drop some mill scheme they had in hand on account of its history and their having no legal justification.

Along with this dispute went that of the boundary of the Castle. The friction was constant with Sir Robert Melville, but unlike the case of the

Mills, the town was always successful in preventing the persistent efforts to encroach on their march. It is pleasing to record that after one of these attempts of Sir Robert's, the Council sent asking him to allow them to meet him at the Castle gate to accompany him to the kirk. This he agreed to; and after many another tussle when Lord Melville—for he succeeded his father in this title—died, the Council attended his funeral to Monimail in a body, and expressed in a minute their feeling that they had lost a true friend. But the *hatchet* was unburied. One case in 1705 was serious. The tenant of the Castle, Colin Mackenzie (we were having an anterin Highlander by then) clandestinely managed to have a wall partly built before the Council observed him. Even till 1873, when the Council purchased the Castle, and re-sold it with new titles to the late James Shepherd, Esq., did this controversy of 300 years continue.

## CHAPTER III.

## BURNTISLAND CASTLE.

The late Mr W. A. Laurie, W.S., Keeper of H.M. Gazette for Scotland, proprietor of Burntisland Castle for many years previous to 1872, had ample opportunity and an ardent desire to clear up its early history. Mrs Laurie has told me that the entrance gate was built by him, and is a replica of one in York which he pointed out to her. In inscribing 1119 (similar to that in the Castle) on one of the shields above the gate he had satisfied himself that a tower (I have no doubt the present square tower portion of the Castle) existed at that date. The tower portion is stated by various writers as being mentioned in the time of Robert, the first of the Stuarts (Bleair Eye), 1382, when it was called the tower of Kingorne Wester, and was occupied by the Duries of Durie. Mackie, author of "Castles, Prisons, and Palaces of Mary of Scotland," visited the Castle about 1840, and originated the statement that the Duries built the north and west wings. He says, "Over the principal entrance the arms of the Duries are inserted under a Gothic canopy supported by two savages girded with laurels." The arms of the Duries consisted of a shield bearing a chevron between three crescents, and may be seen on the Abbot's seal of George Durie in Chalmers' "History of Dun-

fermline.” Neither this design nor the savages can be found at the Castle. In the vestibule, which might be described as Gothic, are three Coats of Arms—one bearing the date 1119, another 1382, while the third has the initials M.R., and the date 1563, the year of Queen Mary’s visit. The execution of these might be early 17th century.

Mackie also states that the Castle had been anciently known as “The Abbot’s Hall.” Considering the history of the Castle one would think this an appropriate name and one very likely to be used. But a recent writer questions this, and has tried to show that this name was a monopoly of Abbotshall, Kirkcaldy, where the monks had another residence. In Volume III. of the Memoirs of the Melvilles, by Sir William Fraser, K.C.B., LL.D., I find a grant (1586) to Sir Robert Melville from Patrick, Master of Gray, commendator of Dunfermline, of which the following is an extract:—“The porte and hevin callit the hevin of Brintiland lyand contigue with the landis of Wester Kingorne . . . all and haill the stane hous, toure, and fortalice, sum tyme callit the Abbotis Hall.” So that settles that.

The first proprietor of the Castle of whom much is known was George Durye, Abbot and Commendator of Dunfermline. He was Abbot from 1539 to 1564, though he had acted as Abbot 1530—1538 in room of the Abbot of these years, James Beton. He was the last of the Abbots, the

so-called Abbots succeeding him—Robert Pitcairn; Patrick, Master of Gray; and George Gordon, Earl of Huntly—being Commendators only. The last-mentioned was the instigator of the murder of the Earl of Moray at Donibristle. It was this George Durie who in 1538 gave to Peter Durie “our lands of Nether Grange called le mains,” probably foreseeing the dangerous character of the reform movement. From this time till the Reformation the lands of the monasteries all over Scotland were in this way being handed over to friends. We may conclude, however, from the history of Queen Margaret’s relics that the Abbot retained some right of access to the Castle. This Abbot was very zealous against the reformers, having voted for the death of Patrick Hamilton and Walter Mill. He is credited by Knox with the death of Sir John Melville of Raith, who, in the minority of Mary (1549), is said to have obtained a grant of the Castle. This alone would account for Durie’s enmity. Knox writes in his “*Historie of the Reformation*”:—“But however it was, the cruel beast, the Bishop of St Andrews, and the Abbot of Dunfermline (Durie) ceased not until the head of that noble man (Sir John Melville) was stricken from him.” For such services it may be, but more probably for his preservation of St Margaret’s remains, this Abbot’s name two years after his death was added to the roll of saints of the Roman Church. The Rev. Peter Chalmers, in his “*History of Dunfermline*,” writes:—“It

does not appear that purity of morals was one of his claims to sainthood, as he had two natural children legitimated on 30th September, 1543." This account has been accepted as correct by the Rev. Mr Campbell of Kirkcaldy and others. However, Chalmers himself shows, in his second volume, page 399, that Durie's house of Craig-luscar was built by him in 1520, and that he may have been married before he became a priest, which was not till 1530, as a memorial stone has been found in the ruins with the date 1520, the arms of the Duries, and the conjoined initials G.D.—M.B. The latter may have been his wife, and the children mentioned above hers. This legitimating may have been a matter of church law rather than morality. "But however it was," as John Knox would say, we are indebted to George Dury that the story of the Castle affording sanctuary to the remains of the sainted Margaret cannot be dismissed as a mere tradition.

"There's Rossend's venerable keep,  
Sheltered awhile Saint Margaret's bier,  
Five hundred springs have bitten deep,  
Her grisly fort and dungeons drear.

In ancient feuds a sentinel,  
In later years a snug retreat,  
For Abbot fat, whose bead and bell  
Made penance glum for wine and meat."

The following account of the part played by Durie in the preservation of St Margaret's relics is condensed from Chalmers' version of "J.R.'s"

translation of the "Life of St Margaret," printed at Douay, 1660:—"It is told that Alexander III., after the death of his own Queen Margaret, took pains to collect and preserve the remains of St Margaret, wife of Malcolm Canmore, by enclosing the bones in a silver chest enriched with precious stones, which during the tumults of the Reformation was taken for safety from the noblest part of the Abbey of Dunfermline, where it rested, to Edinburgh Castle. When the heretics had trampled under foot all humane and divine laws and seized the sacred moveables of the church . . . some things of greater veneration were saved from their sacriligious hands and transported into the Castle of Edinburgh." But "some more provident fearing these mad men might assault the Castle transported the coffre, wherein was the head and hair of St Margaret, and some other moveables of great value, into the Castle of the Baron of Dury. This lord of Burie was a reverend father, priest, and monk of Dunfermline, who, after his monastery was pillaged and the religious forced to fly, dwelt in the Castle." Dunfermline Abbey was almost destroyed by the mob, instigated by the landless nobles, on 28th March, 1560. Father Durie had a house on Craighuscar Hill, Dunfermline, as well as Burntisland Castle, but it is unlikely the relics would be taken back again to Dunfermline, at least at that troublous time. A seaport was safer both for the relics and the Abbot. Chalmers, Vol. II., page 177, agrees with

this view. How long the silver chest remained hidden in the Abbot's Castle cannot be known, but in 1597 (33 years after Durie's death) "the relics were delivered into the hands of the Society of Jesus, missionaries in Scotland," who took them to Antwerp. Lastly, our holy Father Pope Innocent the Tenth, in the first year of his Pontificate gave plenary indulgence to the faithful who prayed before the relics in the Chapel of the Scotch Collegs of Douay, on the 10th of June, festival of this holy Princess." The relics were removed from the College at the French Revolution to Venice, whence they were brought to the Escorial, where they still were in 1854, according to reports submitted to the Rev. C. Holahan, at that time sub-Prior of Douay.

The Rev. Father Durie was still Abbot of Dunfermline on the visit of Queen Mary to the Castle, and though grants of the Castle are said to have been made by the reformers to their friends, I question if Durie had been ejected. In the absence of proof to the contrary, I believe it was he who entertained the Queen when she passed the night of the 14th or 15th February, 1563, at the Castle. If so, we may be sure the vigilantly guarded relics of Saint Margaret would be shown to Queen Mary. It was on this night that the romantic and love-sick Chastellard, according to Sheriff MacKay, "committed the fault or crime for which he paid the forfeit of his life." Chastellard was one of the brilliant suite of Mary on



her return from France, and came of a good French family, being "a grandnephew of Bayard the Chevalier, *sans peur et sans reproche*. "He spoke and wrote both prose and verse and was skilled in arms and dancing. He returned to France, but could not rest, and came back to Edinburgh in 1562. Mary was, according to Knox, "over-gracious to the young Cavalier—danced with him in preference to the nobles and exchanged sonnets with him. On the 12th of February, 1563, Chastellard hid himself in the Queen's Room at Holyrood. He was pardoned, but followed the Queen on her journey to St Andrews. She slept one night at Dunfermline and the next at Burntisland, when Chastellard was again found in her room." This second offence could not be overlooked, and he was tried and executed at St Andrews, 22nd February. "His last words were the passionate cry, *Adieu! most beautiful and cruel princess of the world.*"\*

As we have seen, Sir John Melville, of Raith, is said to have received a grant of the Castle in

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\*Chastellard is said to have gained access by a secret stair leading to the beach. An issue on this frequented beach could not be secret. Mr Forbes, of the Oil Cake Co.'s works, tells me that in strengthening the foundations of the works, about 12 years ago, at a depth of 6 feet an arched passage of brick about 4 feet high was broken into. It was examined for a few yards in the direction of the Castle gate, but the difficulty of keeping the candle lit in the impure air obliged the explorer to return. He found a hamper which could not be removed, as it fell to dust in his hands. The walls (part the old Sugar House) had, apparently before the sugar industry, been an important residence. The walls are at one place 5 feet thick, and there are two large wells. In the

1549. As that is the year of his execution he could barely have entered into possession. I came across an interesting fact in reading Fraser's memoirs of the Melvilles. Sir John, when arrested, was riding on "Clayness sands, near Burntisland." This was the ancient name of these sands, the Lammerlaws being known then as the Clayness. As is to be shown in another chapter, there are grounds for the statement that Sir William Kirkcaldy, of Grange, was given a grant of the Castle, for some short period, possibly between 1564 and 1571. After his execution it appears to revert to the Melvilles. These grants from Sir John's time were promised or made, but in those days possession was nine points of the law. The influence of Mary of Guise, and the continued efforts to resuscitate Roman Catholicism in Mary's reign, makes one doubt if any of the Melvilles until about 1580 were ever in occupancy. A. H. Millar, in his book on Fife, says, "After the forfeiture of Sir Robert Melville in 1571 the

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back wall, facing north, at a height of 13 feet is the lintel of a large door, with the inscription

THE BLISSING OF GOD  
SG...SATR JCHIS ANO  
1616

This might easily have been its original height, as the ground formerly rose behind this wall. The wall is arched over one of the wells, which would point to the existence of the well outside the wall of an earlier and smaller house previous to 1616, from which the secret passage may date. If this house was in the control of the Castle and the passage begins in its grounds and ends inside this house, it would be an ideal secret passage. The stair leading from a trap door in Queen Mary's room ends in what is now the scullery.

King granted the property to David Durie." If this is correct—and it is likely, as Melville's behaviour at this time did not please the reformers—then he must have claimed the castle previous to 1571. The King's object in granting the Castle to David Durie may be conjectured. It would be easier to deal with the unpopular monk or his relatives than with a noble taking the popular side. James had an eye on the lands belonging to the Abbey for himself, and on the annexation to the crown in 1587 of properties which had belonged to the Roman Catholic Church, those belonging to the Dunfermline Abbey were exempted. These extensive lands were given as a marriage dowry to his Queen, Anne of Denmark, except the Baronies of Newburn and Burntisland. That the commendator of Dunfermline, Lord Pitcairn, re-erected the burgh into one of Regality in 1574, and that his successor, Patrick, Master of Gray, granted the castle to Sir Robert Melville in 1586, showed the church had still to be reckoned with. "Sir Robert Melville of Murdocarnie," however, appears as proprietor the previous year (1585) when he objects to the new Royal Charter of that year as interfering with the bounds of the Castle. It was this gentleman, then plain Robert Melville, who, according to Tytler, "went to the Capital to get for the reformers 3000 men and some war vessels for the Firth," and who, though thus recognised as a leading reformer, on one of his visits to Queen Mary imprisoned at Loch Leven,

dropped from his scabbard a letter for Mary from Lethington. He is said to have advised Mary to sign her resignation in favour of her son, arguing that being forced from her it would not hold good if she were free. He was with the Queen at the battle of Langside, and in Edinburgh Castle with Kirkcaldy of Grange during its siege on her behalf. He had been ambassador to England in 1562, and in 1586 (now as Sir Robert Melville) he is again ambassador, along with Patrick, Master of Gray, to intercede with Queen Elizabeth for the life of Mary. On King James refusing to receive Elizabeth's apologetic letter on the execution of his mother, Sir Robert was sent to stop her ambassador at Berwick. When in England, he had been sounded by Elizabeth as to the possibility of obtaining the person of King James, and had, on his return, communicated this design to the King. In the absence of the King in Denmark, when he went to bring home his Queen, Sir Robert acted as Chancellor of Scotland. It was on account of his many services that the King erected part of the church land retained for himself into the "Barony of Burntisland for Sir Robert Melville" (Privy Council Records.) Fraser describes the Barony as consisting of Balbie, Over Kinghorn, Welton, Orrock, and Burntisland Castle, the superiority of the same, and advowson (patronage) of the Kirk of Kinghorn Wester." The King could not give Sir Robert the Royal Burgh, but he gave him the office of Customs

Receiver at the port. Sir Robert was elevated to the peerage in 1616 as Baron Melville of Monimail (ancestor of the Earls of Leven and Melville), and died in 1621 at the age of 94.

Though thrice married, Lord Melville had only one son, "Sir Robert Melville, Youngare." Fraser cannot say when, or on what account he was knighted, but when in 1587 the Barony was erected for his father, the father resigned it, and with the consent of the King it was ratified in the son's name. He got into trouble in 1590 for refusing to apprehend a prominent jesuit, James Gordon, who had taken refuge in Burntisland. In the earliest existing Council Records of Burntisland he appears as Provost. He was one of those who cunningly devised the Octarian tumult of December 1596, and he gave refuge in the Castle to Francis Moubray, of Barnbogle, until he left the country. In 1601 he was constituted an Extraordinary Lord of Session, using the law title, Lord Burntisland. (He is styled "Brunttyland" in the Privy Council Records.)

The King had been in Burntisland Castle after the Falkland raid; he visited Sir Robert at the Castle in 1593, remaining several days, and doubtless slept at the Castle on the occasion of the General Assembly in 1601. On the death of Elizabeth, Sir Robert followed the King to London, and remained with him for some years. (Fraser's *Memoirs*.) It is natural, therefore, that when,

in 1617, King James made his first visit to Scotland as King of Great Britain, a "missive" should be dispatched to "Sir Robert Melville to mak his house of Bruntyland patent for His Majestie's resset." (Privy Council Records.) The route is given as "Leith and Bruntyland," and a list of the farmers is given, with the number of their horses, and directions for the renovations of roads.

One would have thought the frequent visits of James would have had an influence on the character of his liegemen in Burntisland. They dissembled their love. The special *bete noir* of James was tobacco. He hated it so that he must needs publish his "Counterblaste to Tobacco," in which he describes it as "a custom loathsome to the eye, hateful to the nose, harmful to the brain, dangerous to the lungs, etc.", yet, in 1637, for selling tobacco without a license, 14 inhabitants of Burntisland were summoned to appear at the Court at Edinburgh, and in their absence (most wicked persons all) were fined 100 merks each. No wonder Providence, as well as King James, occasionally visited Burntisland. Speed says Sir Robert (Lord Melville after 1621) remained Provost till his death in 1635. (The minutes applicable to Speed—1613 to 1636—are now absent.)

The following year (1636) Sir James Melville, of Halhill, "was retoured heir of line to his cousin Robert, second Lord Melville, in the lands of Nether-Grange, or Mains of Wester Kinghorne, the Castle of Burntisland, and the Mills called the

Seamills," etc. In 1638 he received a Crown confirmation of these ratified by Parliament. There was opposition from the bailies of Burntisland, but he denied that he wanted any of the Port privileges. Speed refers to this gentleman as Sir *William* Melville, of Halhill and Burntisland Castle, and says he succeeded his father in Provostship. Must be a slip of the pen. Fraser does not say when Sir James died, but he was succeeded by his son, also Sir James Melville, of Halhill, who may not, however, have had all the lands of the Barony. This Sir James would probably be proprietor of the Castle during its occupation as the headquarters of Cromwell's troops. At this time, in 1654, a curious thing happened in one of their raids. The young Lord Melville, of Monimail, cousin of Sir James, was seized while riding near St Andrews and brought prisoner to the Castle. On Sir James' death in 1664, Fraser says the Barony was sold to "General James Wemyss." The Countess of Wemyss appears, from the Council Records, to have had some interest in the Castle as early as 1655, previous to the death of Sir James Melville. M. F. Conally states that Sir James Wemyss, of Caskieberry, became proprietor of the Castle in 1666. He married Lady Margaret, Countess of Wemyss in her own right, and was in 1672 created a peer for life, with the title, Lord Burntisland. His patent appears in the Privy Council Records. He is referred to in the Council Records, in 1673, as the

Earl of Wemyss, I suppose on account of his being married to the Countess, and speaks then of an agreement with Sir James Melville—apparently a third Sir James. The Countess's name occurs for a good many years. In 1712 it is the Earl of Wemyss, but he appears to have made over the Castle without the Mills, perhaps only on lease, to Colin Mackenzie from 1705.

The writer of an article in the *Fifeshire Advertiser* of 1873 gives the Earl of Elgin as a former proprietor, and Mr Laurie believes it was in his time the Castle seat in the Church was exchanged to the town for the present Castle seat. About 1765 the Castle came into the hands of Murdoch Campbell, Esq., who, hailing from Skye, changed the name to Rossend. In 1790, Robert Beatson, of Kilrie, married Mr Campbell's only daughter, and the Castle remained in the hands of the Beatsons for some time. Colonel Broughton, who was Governor of St Helena before Napoleon's time, married a Miss Beatson, and was proprietor of the Castle. A later proprietor of the Castle, Mr W. A. Laurie, as already mentioned, took a great interest in preserving the antique character of the Castle, and added many "curious and appropriate specimens of armour, heraldry, paintings, and furniture." When in 1873 the late Mr James Shepherd, purchased the Castle, he omitted nothing possible to maintain this venerable pile. It is a grand old building, with its curious stairs, passages, and windows; its oak



lined drawing-room and Queen Anne's room, but it now belongs to the Town Council, and one never can be sure what such a body may do.

In reading Mrs Somerville's memoirs it surprised me that she never once mentions the Castle, although she was related to the Beatsons, and for some time, visited the Castle. Mary Somerville (Miss Fairfax) had a brother who paid court to Miss Beatson, but another came on the scene and "put out young Fairfax's eye." Hence the dryness. Mary and her brother were fond of skipping the afternoon sermon, though their uncle, the Rev. Mr Wemyss, on these occasions sent anxious enquiries after their health. Mary, as the old Fife saying has it, "didna aye gang to the Kirk when she gaed up the Kirkgate," but adjourned to the beach below the Kirk with her brother, to recover the headache induced by her esteemed relative's forenoon sermon, and to "see the whales spouting in the Firth." Happy whales! We have read of schools, but never of congregations of whales. Was this sad ending of "love's young dream" not a condign punishment for Sabbath-breaking? This Rev. Mr Wemyss was the heir to the baronetcy given to Sir James Wemyss (1704), but did not assume the title. The arms of the Wemyss family (the Swan), may be seen on his tombstone in the Kirkyard. His son, Sir James Wemyss, was served heir to the baronetcy on his father's death. The house of the marvellous Mary Somerville, 26-28 Somerville

Street, though now tenanted by a number of families, has been little changed since she, then little Mary Fairfax, made nightly acquaintance with the distant constellations or studied Euclid secretly long after the household wandered in the land of nod. The house adjoining, at the corner of Kirkgate, was also her father's, and was used as a dairy. The garden, now belonging to Leven Villa, has still the grassy bank and stair, with the old wall and two hoary survivors of the row of elms. On her beloved Sunday adjournments to the rocky beach, to ponder on the microscopic or giant denizens of the deep, she passed through the door near the centre of the wall to another on the opposite side of Leven Street, which opened into a second garden, also owned by the Fairfaxes, and then intersected by a little street on which stood the Burgh School and the School house. The arched entrance to this street may yet be seen at the North Station steps.

## CHAPTER IV.

## GOVERNMENT OF THE BURGH.

The Town Council, as originally authorised by James V, “be ye grace of God, King of Scotia,” consisted of 21 members, including a Provost and three bailies. The Councillors were all men of substance, though from the first an attempt was made to have representatives from the leading trades. Annually, in October, the old Council chose the new, and the new and old Councils together then chose the Provost and bailies, two officers—“jandis or serjandie”—two constabillie, a “thesaurare,” “procuror fischal,” and a “dempster.” By rights, these were submitted to what was called a “Head Court of the hail inhabitants,” but this ceremony appears only once previous to 1612. There was another public meeting, held some time after 1592, which may have been made to do in place of it—“Calling ye comon Rollis.” “*Quarto die Mense Octobris* 1605, the quhilk day the burgesses inhabitants of ye bur<sup>h</sup> beand thrie several tymes callit upone at ye Tolbuith Dore . . . ye absentis was nottit and everie ane of yame condemmit in ye unlaw of

fourtie shillings." The chief magistrate was usually a nobleman or lauded gentleman. On one occasion a bailie was advanced to the Provostship, but often there was no Provost, a bailie being chosen "moderator" or "convener." Whether Provost or moderator, the first magistrate was also the representative of the Burgh in the Scottish Parliament, and usually in the General Assembly of the Church, and the Convention of Burghs, which at one time was almost as important as Parliament. These conventions were held in a different burgh each year. In 1607 the convention was held at Burntisland. Each year the Commissioner on his return from the convention presented a report of the subjects discussed, usually 20 or 30 in number. In 1647 there were over 60 subjects filling many pages.

The blanks in the Council Records, and the difficulty of reading some portions, make it impossible to give a complete list of the Provosts or moderators. The following are all I have discovered:—

1592-8.—"Sir Robert Melville, youngare, of Murdocarnie, Knicht, Provost."

1599-1602.—"Sir George Home, of Spot, Knicht, Great thesaurer, was elecit and chosin Provost."

1603.—No Provost.

1604-5.—"Sir Robert Melville, Provost."

1606-10.—“ Ane Potent and nobile Lord,  
George Erle of Dumbare, Lord Home of  
Berwick, Heich Thesaurer of Scotland, and  
cancellare of the esthebare of England,  
Provost.”

1611.—(Bailie) “ Patrick Greiff, burgess of ye  
said Burgh, Provost.”

Town Records absent from 1613 to 1645, but  
in the Privy Council Records of

1617.—“ Patrick Greif, . . . Provost of  
Bruntiland.”

The following two are found in Speed's notes,  
except that he gives the second as William,  
which was wrong:—

1618-1635 (or part of).—Sir Robert Melville,  
after 1621 Lord Melville, Provost.

1640-1649 (or part of).—Sir James Melville, of  
Halhill and Burntisland Castle, Provost.”

From 1649 to 1660—first Commonwealth,  
Cromwell's protectorate, Richard Cromwell,  
and second Commonwealth, there was no  
Scottish Parliament, but a very frequent  
mention is made of the Council of State to  
which the representative bailies were always  
being sent. This body took something like  
the position of the Privy Council, and was  
composed of eight Englishmen sitting at  
Dalkeith, and afterwards at Edinburgh,  
when some Scots were introduced. At the

same time the Commonwealth gave Fife one representative in the Parliament at Westminster. James Sword was elected in 1652 to represent the Fife burghs there, and in 1656 Col. Werthaimer (?) who on one occasion was paid £100 for his maintenance."

1650.—"Captain Andro Watson (Bailie) was electit moderator and convener of thair meetings."

1655.—"George Davidson (Bailie) . . Moderator of ye meetings of Counsall."

1663.—"Gilbert Halyburton (Bailie) . . . apoynted commissioner to the currant Parliament."

1670.—William Ged (Bailie) "commissioner."

1673.—James Dewar (Bailie) "commissioner."

1685.—Michael Seton (Bailie) "commissioner to the Scottish Parliament." (Seton was paid . 40s a day for expenses.

Records absent 1688-1701.

1702.—Alexander Ged (Bailie) "commissioner to Parliament" (and for several years before. On June 5th "Bailie Alexander Ged signified to the Counsell that the reason why he convened them to-day is that he intends, God willing, to goe over to Edgh. upon Munday next to attend the Parliat. sitting doune the next day. And yrfor desires to know what

commands they have to lay on him and what instructions they have to give him anent his voting in the ensuing sessiōne of Parliament. The Counsall's answer is that they were very well pleased with his behaviour in the last sessiōne of Parliat., and that he went along with ye Duke of Hamilton and his pairty who were for the good and interest of their country. And they hoped and expected that he would still adhere and . . . (vote) with that pairty." The Earl of Leven had complained to the Council of Ged's not being of the Court Party. But Ged held that he had fulfilled his promises to the town, and reminded the Earl that the Government owed Burmtisland three years' stipend; nothing had been paid for the transport of troops by the town's boats, and the old promise to grant the town power to impose 2d on the pint of ale was still unredeemed. The Earl's real opposition to Ged lay in Ged's favouring the ill-starred Darien scheme, the colonisation of the Atlantic border of the Isthmus of Panama. This, the English feared, would be detrimental to their plans in India.

In 1702 the Provostship and the representation of the burgh in Parliament were separated for the first time. While Ged

went to Parliament, a Provost remained in Burntisland.

1702-1722.—“ The Right Hon. John Lord Leslie, lawful son of the Earl of Rothes, Provost.”

In 1722 this Lord Leslie became 8th Earl of Rothes, and Commander-in-Chief of the forces in Ireland. Daniel Defoe had just visited Burntisland and Leslie House in the time of his father. Norman Leslie, master of Rothes, who, with his brother John assisted at the murder of Cardinal Beaton, was a son of the 3rd Earl. There are a great many communications in the Council Records from the notorious 6th Earl of Rothes, who was Sheriff of Fife as well as Chancellor of Scotland. He had bonds on the town for money lent, 1667-1681.

1723-24.—“ The Hon. Thomas Leslie, brother german to the Earl of Rothes, Provost.”

1725-27.—“ The Hon. Charles Leslie, brother german to the Earl of Rothes, Provost.”

1780-83.—“ James Townshend Oswald, of Dunnikier, supernumerary counsellor and Provost.”

1788-91.—“ William Ferguson, Esq., of Raith, supernumerary counsellor and Provost,”

1792.—“ Sir James St Clair Erskine, of Dysart, supernumerary counsellor and Provost,”



Returning to 1702 when, for the first time, the offices of Provost and Commissioner to Parliament were separated, we find Bailie Ged was the Commissioner in June. In September, the Council elected the Right Hon. Sir Jon Arskine, of Alva, Knight and Baronet, to be their Commissioner to Parliament. He continued to represent Burntisland until the union of the Scottish and English Parliaments in 1707. In 1706, in reply to a communication from him regarding the union of the Parliaments, the Council at a special meeting wrote that in these critical times they prefer not to be represented (on the question of union then to be decided) at the special Convention of Burghs. "Sir Jon" afterwards represented them in London until after the Union was consummated, and the first election for the new constituencies over. On May 14th, 1708, "Sir Jon Arskine of Alva, their Commissioner to the Parliament of Great Britain," writes saying their address was presented to "Her Majesty, being introduced by the Duke of Montrose . . . The House of Commons was in a great concern to have a good harbour and dockyard in the Firth, and seemed generally to think Burntisland the best. But the invasion broke them up in a kind of confusion. . . ." This invasion, which apparently delayed the progress of Burntisland, was that of the fleet of Louis XIV., who sent 26 vessels with 4000 troops in an unsuccessful attempt to land the "Pretender" at Leith. On 24th May the Council appointed a commissioner to go to

Dysart "to vote for a member (for the group of burghs) for the session to be held on the 8th day of July, at the Citie of Westminster." I believe the first representative for these burghs was Lord St Clair, but on 10th January, 1710, "Colonel James Abercombie was chosen to go to Parliament in place of *Mr* St Clair," who had been unseated on account of being a peer. In June, 1711, Capt. James Oswald, of Dunnikier, is voted for as "their burgess for to represent the said district in the ensuing Parliament of Great Britain." In 1727, "Colonel James Stellar was elected comr. for the Burghs to Parl."

The appointment of the two town's officers (serjandie), whose dress was a four-tailed red coat with white lining, and a cocked hat, was complete on receiving "thair wandis cojuntillie and severallie." These wands were carried with them when delivering missives, and often appear before the Council to deliver "broken wandis" (we hope figuratively) against those who had refused to recognise their authority. One of their duties was to attend the Council to the Kirk. In 1681, "ordanis ye haill Counsell ilk Saboth day to compeir at ye ringing of ye Tolbuith bell, in ye chamber under ye Tolbuith, and attend ye Magistrates to ye Kirk, ye officer David Couper to goe befor them with ye halbert."

The first time "constabills" appear is in 1611, when 3 burgesses are elected "constabills of ye pace" for six months, and in May following

a baxter, a talyeor, and a Coupar were elected in their room. These men gave their services gratis, and Speed says, on the abolition of the system in 1833, that the paid men would never be so efficient as the old.

The Dempster was a person who delivered the finding and sentence of the Court.

According to the report on the Municipal Corporations in 1833, the Council could appoint two Town Clerks.

That the Head Court, by which the self-elected Councils were supposed to be confirmed, was a mere legal formality, and did not allow the end intended—the goodwill of the community—is very often in evidence. A serious instance, showing the popular dissatisfaction with this method of election, occurred in 1617 when (Privy Council Records) “John Boswell, skipper, James Ramsay, Coupar, Eustatius Robertson, mariner,” and 7 others were tried at Edinburgh for disturbing the peace of “Bruntland.” . . . Thay brocht the said Burgh, quhilk of late wes composit of a number of peciable, modest, and obedient inhabitants, in that estate and condiiion that now the obedience of the magistrate is cossiu aff . . . The said persons . . . most unlauchfullie factiouslie and seditiouslie convocat and assemblitt togidder a grite number of the inhabitants without the presence of the magistrat, first in the Kirk about fyve in the clock in ye morning, and in ye

after noone . . . and in Juny last in ye Tolbuith of ye said Burgh, and prouddie and arrogantlie unsurpit upone thain the authorite of ye magistrat. And not content with this form of conrocatiounne thay began to presooome so far of thair pouer and force within ye s<sup>d</sup> burgh that very prouddie and malapairthlie thay took upone thaim the office of the magistrat, and appointit thair meetings with sound of drum. Thay sent twa drumis throu the said Burgh commanding the inhabitants to meet with thame. Thay haif imposit and layd taxatiounne upone ye poor inhabitants the better to mak thame follow oute and prosecute thair factious courses . . .” Only three appeared at the trial. These were committed to the Tolbooth of Edinburgh indefinitely, and the others declared rebels.

In 1611 “Ye Bailies and Clerk of ye Brintland wes committit to the Tolbuith of Edinburgh,” it appears for some evasion of the *sett* of the Burgh. It was in this year Patrick Grief, a bailie, was chosen Provost by a *pluralitie* of votes.

Nor were the Bailies and Councillors always satisfied with the way they were elected. They do not appear to have been consulted as to their willingness to take office. There are innumerable instances of their refusal to accept office. Especially after Cromwell's triumph in 1651 and well into the 18th century the difficulty of obtaining Councillors was extreme. Due to the heavy assessments for the military many burgesses emi-

grated. Even the Town Clerk fled to Aberdour, and refused to return "except he be exempted from quartering, watching and warding." Which was agreed to. Then, after the "bonfyres" and rejoicings, came (1661) Charles II.'s declaration of ecclesiastical supremacy. At first none would sign it; by 1662 only a few, and that with qualifications. Even in 1676 four Councillors were fined £100 each for refusing to sign. Then from gradual loss of trade from the Union came the town's bankruptcy, when the Bailies were imprisoned. A good general example was as late as 1704, when "Ye Council" decided to "fyne Archibald Angus in the soume of ane hundred pounds Scots money for his not accepting to be baillie, and ordaines him to be apprehended and put in ye Tolbuith keep until he pays his fyne or accepts office." At the same time three councillors were fined £50 Scots each, and imprisoned until they "paid or obeyed."

The Council constituted, a move is made to apportion the various duties. The principal committee was what Speed calls the jury of 15, of which I find the foreman termed the "concelare." This body made "ye statutes and common actis." That is, fixed the prices at and the conditions under which the various commodities were to be sold, and framed laws anent beggars, riots, house letting, middens, etc. In early times, the Bailies, while hearing cases, delivered judgment only when the facts were admitted. When disputed, the

jury of 15, or one of similar numbers specially appointed, heard the case. The names of the jurors are written in Latin, and occasionally their calling is added. Mr Allan Rodger, F.E.I.S., Barrhead, has been good enough to translate a few of these, which are here given:—

Bestiarius—Cattle dealer.	Polentarius—Dealer in pearl
Caltarius—Shoemaker.	barley.
Canus—Dog keeper.	Pistor—Miller.
Fabermararius—Smith.	Sartor—Tailor.
Farmarius—A meal seller.	Viator—An officer to summon
Festor—Controller of games.	before a magistrate.
Navila—Boat hirer.	Vestiarus—Clothes dealer.
Nanta—Sailor.	

Then were appointed the “visitors to ye Har-borie,” and to the meal and flesh markets, the ale-tasters, the quartermasters—who kept men watch-ing and warding, to keep order, prevent smug-gling, etc.—the “common Mettaris”—apparently to examine the measures and “wechts”; two stent-masters, and a Postmaster.

The various sources of revenue were roused, in each case to the highest bidder—Anchorage or Docksilver, Postshipe, Beaconage, Boatsilver, Coal dues, Small customs, “Hyred hors” dues or Post-silver (a duty of 5 per cent. on the earnings of each horse). I came on a curious correspondence between the Excise and the Town Council which looked like an offer of a slump sum for the right to collect. Strange! The booths under the Tol-booth, eight in number, and the “Comon Lands,” north and south—the Brume Hills and Craigken-

nochie, and the Links, Lammerlaws, and Kirk-yard—were also roused. A stent roll was then framed by the Stentmasters to meet the requirements of the year. It sometimes happened that the tacksmen found their tack a loss at the end of the year, in which case, on proper representation, the Council granted an abatement.

The Council meetings were held with strict decorum and regularly weekly. The hours of meeting were unearthly, modelled on the daylight saving lines. In 1655 “Ye Counsell enactis and ordainis that no Counsellor be absent from Counsell during ordiner Counsell day promptlie at ye ringing of ye bell qlk sal be at seven houris of ye morning in summer tyme fra ye eleventh of March untill ye eleventh of Sepr. and at aucht houris in ye morning fra ye eleventh of Sepr. untill ye eleventh of March . . . under ye pain of 6/-,” and if half an hour late “3/-”; those departing before the “last prayer 12/-.” In the last case money could be saved by not going at all. Those appearing without “honest hats, or wanting cloaks” were relieved of “6/- for ye first fault, doubling for ye nixt.” For refusing to vote or express an opinion “20/- for ye first fault, doubling yrof fr ye nyxt,” and for those refusing to pay up confining them “as ye counsell sall determine.” These fines were put in the poor’s box—the fortunes of the poor rising or falling with the improper or proper behaviour of their law givers.

## CHAPTER V.

## EDUCATION, AMUSEMENT, AND WORRY.

To fill the office of a Councillor in those days required backbone. An honour it *was*, and one that was dearly earned. But there turned up now and then an unexpected but welcome supply of "beer and skittles." One of these pauses came round on the annual perambulation of the marches. The marches are wider now, but the horse is not yet extinct, and I am sure owners of these, for the mere pride and pleasure of seeing our Town Council "on horseback richly caparisoned," would be delighted to provide their quietest and safest mounts. In 1594 it was enacted that "en Monanday ye Baillies, burgesses, and friemen of ye sd burgh attend ye perambulation of ye marches," under pain of 6/- a head; and in 1655 "All burgesses to accompany ye Baillies and Counsell geirly at Witsormonday to perambulate ye marches of yis burgh." Another annual ceremony, which seemed to provide some consolation, was the visitation of the school, after which the schoolmaster and doctor appeared at the Tolbuith and delivered up the keys of the school and schoolhouse, acknowledging their dependence on the Council, who graciously returned the keys with the invariable



advice to be "more diligent than heretofore," and often reminding them to take special care of the scholars in the kirk on the Lord's day, and prevent them from making a noise and distraction, and to keep them from playing on the "shoar." This "shoar" seemed to have an irresistible and melancholy attraction for that perverse generation of youngsters. In 1673 Bailie Hackston promised to send one of his officers to the "shoar at the Tolbuith" and one to the "Port to prevent children after sermone making a tumult and clamour, and to stop men from meeting and frequenting taverns and tippling."

The "Doctor" was the taker up of the psalm, keeper of the kirk records, and reader of prayers, for which he had a small salary and house. He also assisted the schoolmaster during the week, and received 1-3rd of the scholars fees. There was a schoolmaster in 1596, and the Council nominated certain of the "honestest men of the burgh" for him to lodge with. At this time the schoolmaster, who had a monopoly of the teaching in the burgh, received 100 merks, a free house, and 2-3rds of the fees. A school and schoolhouse were built in 1620 to the south of the present church hall. The salary must have increased before 1723, as on the death of the schoolmaster in that year his widow sued the Council for £120 for salary due. This after many legal ins and outs was "payed." Some time after the town's bankruptcy, there being

no schoolmaster, one came forward and offered his services for 6 months free.

The present Episcopal School was originally the Burgh School, built in 1803. This school, through a succession of able masters, was famous for the teaching of navigation. One of these, John Davidson, was the author of a standard book on "Practical Mathematics." Mr Allan Rodger, F.E.I.S., Barrhead, possesses a copy of the fifth edition, dated 1852, extending to 509 pages of letterpress, and 137 pages of Logarithms. He says it is a far more comprehensive book than any one now issued. John Davidson was followed by his able son, Walter, whose pupils have described to me the walls and ceiling of the school as painted blue, and marked by himself with the positions of the constellations. He had a fine reflecting telescope, used a magic lantern in his lectures (over 70 years ago), and had a printing press. Another master, the late Mr David Low, well maintained the character of the school, and was a man of feeling as well as originality. He was deeply conversant with such subjects as the Scotch fisheries, poor laws, and bi-metalism. "I knew him well," though never a truant. The following beautiful lines, of which he made me a copy, are worth quoting. They were written to assist the agitation in favour of the site for the present cemetery, where he now lies:—

“ Bid them lay me away in yonder nook,  
 In the pure and kindly soil,  
 Where heath and harebell decked of yore,  
 A retreat from care and toil.

Where the rocks shall sentinel my bed,  
 And the woods will softly sigh,  
 And the living lend a chastened look,  
 As they flit or linger by ;

Where affection's tear may fitly fall,  
 And tender memories rise,  
 To relink this changeful earth to heaven,  
 As hope recounts each prize ;

Ye will lay me away in that sweet spot,  
 And awake again the flowers,  
 Where heath and harebell bloomed of yore,  
 God's acre *climbs* such bowers.”

There was also in 1656 a school for “ lassies and small boys,” kept with the permission of the magistrates, by a Mary Malpas, and afterwards by other women teachers. This school is said to have been kept in a room of 35 High Street. This fine old building has coats of arms over two of the windows with the date 1626 and the initials R.R. and A.M. This date may only mark a renovation of the structure, as there is a tradition that its name of Cross Keys had been used when it was an inn or hospice in Roman Catholic times. It was an inn 60 or 70 years ago. When the Albert Pier was built there existed in addition to the “ Cross Keys,” “ The Waterloo,” on the site of the new Council Chamber; “ The Perth Hotel,” where “ The George” now is; “ The Black Bull,” north of the present “ Steamboat Tavern”; “ The



The "Old Ship" Tavern.

Old Ship," at the back of the "Steamboat Tavern"; and "The Green Tree," in old Dock Place—anciently there were trees there. "The Green Tree" depicted on the left of the Tolbuith in Chapter 7 was its successor. An older tavern was "The Castle o' Pox," or pocks, which stood where the first house on the High Street now stands, and which has inherited this peculiar name, supposed by some to be derived from its having been a store for sacks. I have no doubt that the name is a corruption of *Castor and Pollux*, a favourite sign in old days for seaport taverns. Sailors believed that the twin balls of electric fire playing round the mast heads in a storm and named Castor and Pollux, promised good weather. In Brewer's Dictionary, under *tavern*, a long list of corrupted titles may be seen. Here are several:—"The cat and fiddle," the popular rendering of the Latin *Caton Fidèle*; "The Bag o' Nails"—*Bacchanals*; "The Iron Devil"—*Hirondelle* (a swallow); "The Bully Ruffian"—*Bellerophon* (a ship).

Although James VI., Charles I., and James VII. were golfers, the Bailies do not seem to have amused themselves with the game which became so popular on Burntisland links in later days. They indeed frowned on such frivolity. In 1668 some impertinent innovators had been measuring the suitableness of the links for such purposes, and a complaint was made to the Council of "persons playing at bulletis on ye lynks." This was not golf, but a kindred game

at which a ball was used. After grave deliberation the Council concluded that "ye grass was likely to be destroyed," and a warning was given that anyone "doing ye lyke again" would be mulcted in "Fyve Pounds." However, the desire for relaxation found vent in an annual horse race as early as 1652. This was run on the sands from Burntisland to Pettycur, and though patronised by the Magistrates may have originated with Cromwell's horsemen, billeted in the town at that time. A cup won at these races is said to be in the possession of an old Burntisland family now in Australia.

Occasionally a coronation, a royal birthday, or other notable event, was the excuse for a day off. On Charles II. being crowned, 25th March, 1661, "bonfyres for ye coronation in England" were ordered. In 1679, on the arrival of the Duke of Monmouth, half a barrel of gunpowder was burned "to compliment the Duke on his return from the Wemyss." On 28th May, 1683, "ordaines each person to put bonfyres in front of thair houses to-morrow in honour of his Majesty's birthday," and the Treasurer is to "advance poudre for fyrring of gunes at oight of ye cloik." The Tolbooth bell was to be rung from 6 to 10. On 26th June, 1688, there was a similar ongoing on the birth of a son (the "Old Chevalier") to James VII. He is called in the records "ane heich and mighty Prince and Stewart of Scotland."

There were outings, too, for the "Commissioner" to Parliament, conventions, and assemblies; but these could hardly be classed as pleasure excursions, when we remember the comparatively slow and uncomfortable travel, and the distances covered—from Ayr on the one hand to Aberdeen on the other. But there was one treat in the exercise of which they were "past masters"—the "banquet," the contemplation of which should make the teeth of a modern Councillor water. A Burgess on his admission, which cost as much as £30 Scottis, according to agreement, and on his swearing to be true to the King, the Magistrates etc., the bargain was cemented by the new burgess "standing his hand."

This indispensable rite was sometimes innocently called "the spice and wine," but was, as Speed implies, something more than a mere "tastin'." It is followed in the records by spaces of eloquent silence and poorly attended meetings. In this way producing a sobering effect. The sons of Burgesses were admitted *gratis*, saving the banquet, which was never omitted.

The saying "Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward" was eminently applicable to the Bailies of Burntisland. Their privileges were enjoyed at a high figure. Greed and envy from the rich proprietor, the blackleg trader or craftsman, the out-of-work or professional beggar, tortured them ceaselessly. Inventing taxes to pay off

bonds; appealing to the seductive labyrinth of the law on matters sometimes serious, sometimes trivial, or in despair taking refuge in arbitration; fighting the plague or terrified by witches; worried for want of a minister, or the possession of one to be kept for better or worse; threatened from high quarters against the holding of conventicles; commandeered by the military authorities, and ultimately ruined by them and disfranchised. Deep is the debt we owe them. They had perforce to wear the wrinkled brow of care that we might smile in blyther days. I often ponder on the battles they fought for us as I read the fast disappearing names on their tombstones.

There was one pleasure pure, without money and without price, valued and shared by the meanest inhabitant—Burntisland if poor was beautiful. I have spoken to those who could tell me how it looked over 100 years ago. Poor and rich were enthusiastic in its praise. No battering Round House, roaring express, thundering coal hoist, or cursèd syren outraged the ear. “The echoes of the mountain repeated the murmur of the winds or the dashing of the waves on the vermillion cliffs. Framed in the hills, the Links rolled in green waves from Nellfield to the Delves, broken only by the crags of Craighkennochie and the dubs at the Lochies. The sands, a white and glittering bracelet, clasped the blue bay from Lammerlaws to Kingswood neb. At low tide the broad sands



were crowded with cockles and spouts, now, alas! extinct: poisoned by the refuse from oil and coal. From the harbour to the Lammerlaws point stretched a range of embattled rocks crowned with a rampart of green. In front of the Kirk the top had many green knolls to which on Sundays the country hearers adjourned between sermons to eat their lunch, the banks here inviting visits to the beach by many winding paths among the whins. Near was a rock-hewn stair called the "Mare's (mer=sea) Delves," by which fishers usually descended to the rocks. The point of the Lammerlaws alone is left, and soon its last divot will be kicked into the sea by the united efforts of this pierrot, football, and School Board fed generation. The long imprisoned sand will then be blown away, if not secured by some contractor. There are a good many cartloads. The rock may then be turned into a few hundred tons of road metal, and a natural shelter to the shipping and beach and an ornament to the town, finally got rid of. Previous to the blasting of a rock projecting in front of the Steamboat Tavern and the building of "The Provost's Pier," the banks sloped to the water and were covered with trees.

Sweet Burntisland's snugly fenced,  
 Wi' friendly hills around the north;  
 There's no a toon sae circumstanced  
 For health or beauty on the Forth.

The Delves, Doohhead, and Kingswoodend,  
Temper the bitter Russian gale,  
Dunearn and the Binn defend  
When Boreas' icy blasts assail.

Yet in the hottest days of June,  
Half-circled in the summer waves,  
Cool breezes fan the burning noon,  
Released from Neptune's crystal cave:

By Alexander's Monument  
We skirt the silver sand-girt bay,  
To rest a-while among the bent,  
Or in the Delves recesses stray.

Let's gain Dunearn's lake-tipped crown,  
And view the prospect far and wide,  
The Pentlands, Bass, the Law, and down  
The Firth of Forth's resplendent tide;

Inchkeith, Inchcolm, old Aberdour's  
Romantic avenues and dens,  
To distant Stirling's cloud-tapped towers,  
And far away, the Grampians.

## CHAPTER VI.

## GOVERNMENT AGAIN, PLUS TRADE.

From 1592 to 1611 the Councillors were very busy framing a complete set of ordinances for the management of the burgh. In fixing the prices and manner of sale of goods the following articles appear:—"Kaikes, aitmeall, bred, buttare, cheise, fleshes, beif, muttony, swyne, fyshe, candill, aill, and Inglis beir." About this time there is no notice of milk, eggs, or whisky; nor until later do I observe coal. What passed down "Thrappleton's Wynd" was a prime consideration. The weight, quality, and price of "bred, maill, and fleshes" received searching attention from the visitors to the "maill and fleshe mercats." "Freemen baxters" must sell "thair bred and maill" only "at ye Mercat Cross Munday, Wedinsday, and Saturday," though they might sell these in their booths on other days. "Unfriemen" bakers—from outside or who were not members of the Bakers' Guild—had always to sell at "ye croce," and were not allowed to go from door to door with their "advantage bred." "That no persone nor persones pretend nor tak upone hand to sell any advantage bred, bot onlie sixpennie bred, twelff pennie bred, twa shilling bred, thrie shilling bred,

four shilling bred." Fleshers had to break "thair fleshes after nyne hours in ye day, on Mercat days," and in presence of "ye comon breker of flesche," and not in "thair buiths or houses on Mercate days but in ye Mercate."

As showing the attention paid to the rearing of animals intended for consumption in 1609, "Swyne neither young nor olde" were allowed to walk about "ye streets," and at one time on a visit of the plague all were destroyed and their keeping tabooed. Butter was a luxury in 1609: "Ordainis yat no buttare sal be sauld any derar within yis burgh heirefter nor four shillings ye pund, and guid and sufficient saltand, under ye paine of fortie shillings of unlaw, Toties quoties."

The authorities not only prevented unauthorised persons coming into the town to sell, but the lieges were forbidden to take wares of their own manufacture, or imported, out of the town to sell until the inhabitants or the Council were supplied at a *reasonable* rate. A good example is given at a late date, 1728, when James Welsh was hauled up for carrying his "fyshe" out of the town without offering them for sale there. He defended himself by saying he could not get a sufficient price in the town. The Council held this was not true, and "ordained that the town's fyshers in tyme coming bring thair haill fyshes to the full sea opposite the town's dial, and there expose them to publick sale till the town be served

at reasonable prices," and afterwards the fishers "may carry thair fyshe wherever they please." But it was sometimes the other way about. In 1728 a whale had been driven ashore on the sands. The Marquis of Tweeddale, possessing the rights of the Abbey, sent demanding it. The Council, delighted with the providential flotsam, had already sold it for "twentie nyne pundis," and in reply took to boiling down the importance of the Cetacean, sarcastically terming it "a small fyshe called a bottlenose"—a mere sprat, which ought to have been beneath the notice of a Marquis! His Lordship, however, had the whale arrested in the hands of the purchaser. The law's delays were impossible in such a case; the "small fyshe" getting more offensive every hour, the Council had to hand over the shekels, after again commenting very freely on the meagreness of the "fyshe's" proportions.

Speed says that at one time there were over 60 brewers, and that much of their produce was exported. I find that in 1652, 31 brewers were fined for selling "dear aile." Their malt and brew houses were in the gardens along the north side of the High Street. In 1610 a committee of four was appointed to visit the markets, including the "cunsterie of ye aill." This committee tasted the ale—we have never been hard up for men who at the call of duty would face any risk—and examined the materials and method of its manufacture. In 1655 it was "ordained that all aill must not be

sold dearer than two shillings ye pynt." In 1665 the King was petitioned to gift the town a merk on the boll of malt, and an agitation began to try to obtain for the town's benefit "two pennies on ye pynt of aill." These efforts were revived with great energy after the town's bankruptcy in 1700 and the union of 1708—after which all the burghs on the Fife coast were in a languishing condition—and came to a head in 1720. In that year, in language fitted to melt the heart of a stone, the Council sends a long petition to Parliament, setting forth the national services rendered by the town's sheltering roads, the depth of water in "ye harborie," its suitableness for victualling, cleaning, and "carooning his Majestie's ships," it being environed on the East, West, and North pairts with the finest and largest parks and enclosures (fences or walls were unknown in Scotland before 1681). "This Burgh is also endued And adorned with a church of the finest and handsomest fabrick of any of its bounds and extent for North Britain. Which fabrick and the said useful And valuable harbour with the toune house or Prison house That have always been in use to be supported Upholden and Repaired out of the comon Revenue is now fallen under a great decay and amounts to so small a matter As it altogether with the monthly voluntar contributions of the Burgors" does not prevent it from being "sunk in debt And upon the very brink of Ruin" . . . obliged to apply to its creditors for a supercedere

for several years before any Magistrate or Council would accept office. The petitioners finish up by asking leave to impose "two pennies Scots per pynt on all bear and aill brewed or sold in the Burgh." This petition was granted. From 1723 annually the tax was sold to the highest bidder, in the presence of one or more of the Commissioners for West Fife. One of these seemed to be very popular—John Moubray of Cockairney—as in 1727 the Council "ordaines a dinner to be provided for Cockairnie," the treasurer to pay the same, and Bailie Angus and the Clerk's charges for waiting upon him (at Cockairney to invite him). This twopence on the pint did not suit the brewers, who in 1726 petitioned the Council to abate 4s on each barrel of "aill or bear brewed," or they would be ruined.

The chief of the remaining "Statutes" of 1596 were "ye harbourie," middings, setting of houses, injurious words, baughe straikes, streking with bathons, drawing of wapons, galloping horses. Two years earlier it was enacted that the "red be partit to ye lynks at ye eist end." Later there was a walled enclosure near the centre used for this purpose. Each householder removed his own rubbish. In spite of severe penalties the midden system continued till 1833. In 1781 there was a petition from the inhabitants, who complained that "when trying to get home at night in ye dark they either tumble into ye muck middings and dung hills, or break their heads on ye carts

in ye High Street." The Council thereupon gave notice by "tuck of drum" to have the same removed within 8 days "so as to allow the water to run alongside the street." In 1611 no one was to "set a house to incomers" without acquainting the "Provost, Baillies, and Counsell in writ," and no one was to give house room to any "strong and ydle beggaris." This supervision of incomers arose from the fear of plague mainly, of which there were many visits during the 17th century and later. In 1711 a night guard of 12 men were on duty at the harbour from 8 p.m. to 4 a.m. to prevent ships or boats from landing, and there was a barricade at the head of the West Bulwark. In 1659:—"This Burgh being a place of comon passage for strangers, among them many idle vagabonds and other wicked persons, ordains that the inhabitants of Burntisland allow none such to lodge in yr houses without intimating their names to the magistrate under "ye paine of fyve pounds for ye first, doubling for ye seconde, and sumarlie banished for ye third." This threat of banishment was no idle one. It was often put in force, whole families being put outside the town. In 1657 Janet ——— having raised a scandal about "Captain George ——— his wyff," which was enquired into by the Kirk Session, "ordained the sd Janet to be whipped throu ye town and banished . . . and if ever she be fund in that toun againe She shall be burnt in ye theik."

Every burgess had the right to carry a sword,



and "the drawing of wapons" was a frequent cause of injury and even death. In 1611 William Balnerage, wright, and John Black, skynnar, were tried by "ane assysis of 15 for drawing of quhn-yarie upone ye comon streitis . . . in hie contempt of our statutes." They were fined "ilk ane of yame fortie shillings and ordains ilk ane of yame to crave forgiffiness to ye toun upone yair kneis and not to do ye lyk hierafter under ye paine of ane hundredth lbs, and to remain in warde for twentie four houres." As early as 1598 a certain Councillor at the Council meeting became very abusive, "drew his whanger, threw down his glove and challenged any of them to single combat." Nobody took up the glove, so he departed triumphant, "betook himself to his hous, and harangued them from his windock." He was fined only ten merks. In another case, given by Speed, John Brown (1602) and his son were hanged at Leith for causing the death of three Spanish merchantmen. The heads were brought over and stuck on poles on the Island. In 1666 William Moncrief, Talyeor in the Burgh, was murdered by William Groome of Dunbar, having "stricken him in ye bodie with a whinyer." He was tried at Edinburgh, the Council hoping "he would suffer here." In 1660 Alexander Boswell, skipper, was murdered by a trooper of Captain Fermer's Company. He was surrendered to Captain Fermer.

There is no means of knowing what were the piers built by James V. just previous to its erection into a Royal Burgh in 1540. But I find the Graysunday, West Bulwark, and Earne Craig existed in 1600. The Graysunday was a half tide pier used by the ferry boats, and in 1804 the back wall of it, as it were, was the North face of the East Head. Its peculiar name, sometimes in the more misleading form of Grey Sunday, has often attracted attention without its derivation being guessed. Farnie got in a temper over it, and thought it insoluble. Here is my translation—*Grâce à Dieu*—God be thanked—so appropriate and like the spirit previous to the Reformation. The East Head was necessary to the existence of the Greysunday. Both it and the West Head are mentioned in the report of the Military Commission in 1627 who advised forts to be built at each side of the entrance to the harbour. The exact position of one of these on the East Head is known. The West Bulwark was what is now called Cromwell's Pier. The Earne Craig ran south into the harbour from east of the Castle. Burntisland and Kinghorn had one Customs officer between them till 1598, when (Privy Council Records) "Schir George Home Wedderburn, comptroller to our sovereign Lord, constitute Maister William Syme coquett clerk of Brintiland, and delivered him the half of the coquette sele to be used by him as clerk. Vigesimo Julie 1598." There was a Bailie William Syme at that time. Laing in his

“Ancient Scottish Seals” gives a list of 7 “cokete” seals only. Was Syme’s “cocquett sele” that mentioned by Speed as showing an image of James V. in armour? In “Cardonnel’s Scottish Coinage” 8 coins of James V. are mentioned as showing him in mail.

According to Speed, nine vessels belonged to Burntisland in 1640—two of 115 tons each, two of 160 tons each, and the remainder 120, 105, 85, 80, and 50 tons respectively, as well as coasting vessels, crears, and ferry boats decked and open. He gives the principal imports about 1680 as wood from Norway, flax from Flanders, French wine, malt and grain from England, beef, hides, and grain from the Highlands. Most of the goods from the Highlands was for Dunfermline, Cupar, and Dundee. I have heard that live stock were landed at Burntisland and driven overland as far as Dundee, or transhipped to Leith by means of the fleet of luggage boats, termed “big boats.” No doubt there would be cases like this, as there was an important luggage service from the first. The carriage of cattle by this service entered on a new phase on the advent of the Messrs Young’s cattle rearing industry in 1840, when from 700 to 800 cattle, besides sheep, were disposed of annually, value about £10,000. The boats at this time were from 50 to 60 feet long, about 18 feet wide, and very fast. One may be seen in “Swan’s Views of Fife,” Vol. 2, page 281. The boats

were decked, and the cattle walked down an inclined plane into the hold.

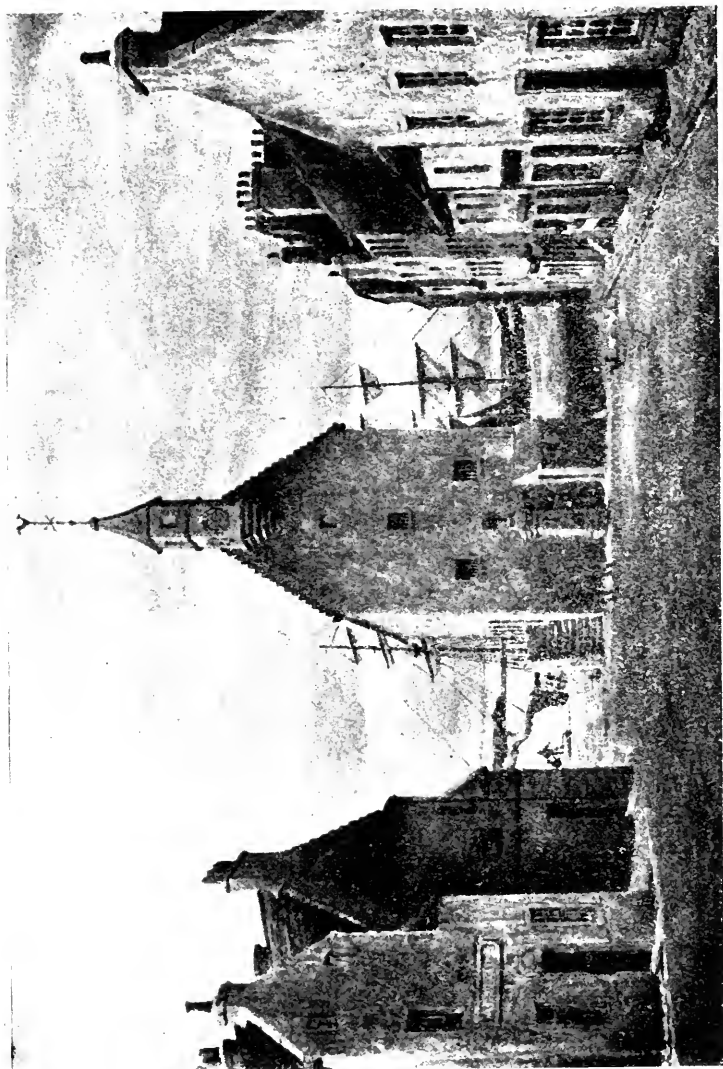
In 1555 "Bruntheland" exported hides, herring, and cod. About 1680, coal, ale, and table linen were the chief exports. Defoe on his visit about 1710 writes thus:—"Linen was made in Burntisland and all the coast towns of Fife, and was much liked in England." Speed says the coal as late as 1680 was brought from Fordell in paniers, on horseback, by the beach, and was shipped chiefly to Holland. It was not till well through the 18th century that there were any further attempts to add to local industries. In

1776 Thomas Parker made additions to "his Sugar House," and later the Vitriol Works were founded. In the first half of last century the herring fishing and curing assumed vast proportions, at one time some 30,000 barrels being exported annually. I think the harbour approach to the curing houses may have received its curious name of "Spice rue" during this period. Somerville Street had a manifest odour, and a great many French craft were engaged in the export, bringing fruit in exchange. The French *épice* was humorously correct.

Small customs were levied on the following articles in 1670:—Lint, wool, cloth, merchant goods, iron, cuil (coal), salt, timber, malt, draff, beef, sheep, cow, hors, swyne, fishe, meal, butter, cheise, bred. In 1685 the anchorage was roused

for £175; Boatsilver, £146; Small Customs, £174; Coals, £50; the Comon lands, 314 merks Scots; booths under the Tolbooth, eight in number, from £3 10s to £10 each = £34 10s. At the same period the "cess" on proprietors and traders amounted annually to from £800 scots to £1200 scots. For strictly local purposes "the haill inhabitants" were always being applied to in addition to their liability to serve in defence of the town, for special night and day committees, as well as ordinary watching and warding, and to assist in cleansing the harbour or paving the streets, at both of which women helped.

Anchorage ranged from 2s for the smallest boat to £6 5s for ships of "300 tunes" as long as these were Scottish. "Forraine" ships, in which were included English as late as 1685, were charged double. (Free trade had been introduced by Cromwell, but it disappeared with him. An attempt was made to reintroduce it about 1688, which was strongly resisted by Burntisland.) For shipping coal 3s per load was charged, and about the same time (1680) for the purpose of relaying the "calsie from the foot of the North Wynd to the Sea Milne dams, the duty was raised to the townsfolk to £2 scots per load.



THE TOLBOOTH IN 1843.

## CHAPTER VII.

## TOLBOOTH AND CROSS.

“ Before 1600 houses were along the shore and continuous on both sides of ‘King High Street’ (I find the expression in 1607 ‘Ye principall King hie Streit’); not so continuous in Back Street, and detached houses at South Hill.” In the records in 1592 is the phrase “To mak patent ye Tolbuith of oure sd Burgh,” and in 1604 a proclamation was made “at ye Tolbuith dore.” Whether this was a building merely adapted to the purpose does not appear, but in 1605 it is proposed to “big ane new Tolbuith,” and in May 1606 contracts are entered into for “bigging ye Tolbuith,” Council house, ward houses, “iron for windocks (six to be glazed), stane, water, lime, and warkmen.” The stone work was to cost 1600 merks, but it cost more. In 1609 “Ye buiths and ye clappe under ye Tolbuith” were let for the first time to various individuals. In 1612 James Thompson, wright, contracted to line the interior of the Council chamber with “aik, and range pillaris,” and to build a stair to “ye loftis.” This interesting structure was removed in 1843 on the building of the Albert steamboat pier and the road to Kinghorn. Farnie stigmatises it as “that abominable old court house with its out-

side stair." It would see many a stirring scene in the 230 odd years of its existence, especially in the three years before and nine years after Cromwell's arrival, during which period it was fitted up for soldiers. When the Council patriotically vacated it in 1648 they little thought it would be 12 years a barracks. My illustration of it has been constructed from a small woodcut, a water-colour of my own of the old "Green Tree," and the descriptions of the people who have seen it. It has been shown to several of these who are still alive, who recognise it as being correct. The doors of the cells were of strong iron grating throughout, so that the prisoners could always be kept in view. It was no uncommon thing to see a string let down from the window of a cell to which friends would attach some luxury denied by the authorities. The kind-hearted Town's Officer winked at this and other liberties, but he went too far when he took "half a crown" from "a gentleman" incarcerated for debt who wanted a bottle of whisky. While absent on this errand of mercy, the prisoner got out of his cell and escaped, and the Town's Officer lost his berth. "There's many a slip 'tween the cup and the lip." There was a large hall used for trials, public meetings, entertainments, and dances. Off this hall at the west end was the Council chamber. The booths on the ground floor were at first used by their tacksmen for storing and exhibiting goods on market days.



Due to the blank in the records, the first mention I found of a clock is in 1658, when Henrie Crawford was appointed in room of James Anderson "for attending to ye toun clock." In 1683 a clockmaker was appointed at £8 yearly. In 1727 "The toun cloack is altogether irregular and out of order, and the "Tolbuith steiple" so shaken and ruinous that the bell cannot be rung "without the hazard of dinging down the scats and endangering peoples lives." So after repairing the steeple they tried a clockmaker from Dunfermline as a change. (It was not till 1789 that the town could boast a resident "watchmaker." In October, when the "Hon. Charles Leslie, Lord Provost," took the oath of allegiance to His Majesty George II., a motion was made, either by chance or good guiding, "that for the credit and honour of the toun it was necessary to have the toun's horologe on the Tolbuith repaired, and the deal (dial) plates gilded and made bright." The "Lord Provost" took the hint and "undertook to doe the same upon his own chairges." This word horologe seemed all the go at this time. The mocking challenge "Yoak yer orlitch"—look at your watch, implying the unlikelihood of your having one, was peculiar to Fife.

I have not discovered when the bell was first obtained, but fortunately chanced on entries in the records of 1677, when having got cracked it was sent abroad to be mended. The expense was met by public subscription. This date corresponds

with one on the bell. This beautiful and interesting bell, now resting in the lobby of the Town Hall, is said to have been purchased from Berwick, where it hung in the tower of the Castle. The following inscription makes a circuit of the shoulder, but it is not clear whether I-EN-LAN- is the beginning or end. It may be "First, in the year" 1595. I am told there is an estate near Berwick called Claster:—"I - EN - LAN - 1595 - SOVPLIE - SVIS - NONSIFE - PARLES - HABITANS - DE - CLASTRE - 1677 - BEN - YCK - WER - HER - GORTEN - DOR - G - H - S . . ."

The authorities at the Scottish Museum could make nothing of this. On the side of the bell is a fine relief of an antique ship.

It had been thought till 1912 that the accepted position of the Market Cross, marked by paving stones in the shape of a cross, a little to the west of the Town Hall, might only approximately mark its position, especially as it is not central but considerably to the north side. However, in relaying it then Mr Waddell, Burgh Surveyor, took the opportunity of examining the foundations, and found that these had been substantial, of cut free-stone, circular, and 16 feet in diameter. There can be no doubt that this is the original position of the "Croce hous," "House of Cunzie," or "Tronhouse," so frequently mentioned 1604-1612 and 1646-1663. I am inclined to think there would never be a sculptured cross. Speed says some erection in the shape of a pillory stood near

the centre of the High Street. It would probably be attached to this Cross House. Some of these circular cross or market houses still survive in England. In 1609, apparently this house is spoken of, when James Baltrame is "put in ye Tronhouse for 24 hrs."; and when in 1646, on the death of George Mareton, Town Clerk, the Council directs that the town's seals, books, and writs be recovered from the house of Cunzie. In 1604 it is termed "Ye Mercat Croce," in 1606 "Ye Croce hous," in 1663 "Ye West Croce house." (Part of the Customs may have been collected at some supplementary house at the East Port.) This Cross house was demolished in 1663, and in 1666 "Calsay" was ordered to be laid "where ye old croce house stood." Where the new house was built is not clear, but it was nearer the Tolbuith. It was again removed in 1685 and a new one built "opposite the end of Bailie Ged's dyke." For several reasons I think this would be still further west, one of which is that in 1711 the Cunzie is spoken of as if quite close to the Tolbuith.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## WAR.

As foreshadowed in Chapter II., “Brintelin” from 1540 was something more than *Portus Salutus* or *Portus Gratus*; it was building, fitting out, and repairing war vessels; and so, when the English Admiral Seymour appeared in the Firth in 1548 he “fortified Inchkeith, and destroyed the shipping at Burntisland.”\* But he did not remain for ever, as in 1560 another English commander, Admiral Winter, reported that he was attacked by the French forts at Inchkeith and Burntisland, and silenced those of the latter in self-defence.† Burntisland was one of the places spoiled by the French troops of Mary of Lorraine, as the Castle was believed to belong to Kirkaldy of Grange,‡ but more probably because he was a friend of the Melvilles, whose Protestant influence may for the time being have ousted the monkly proprietor Durie.

The Privy-Council Records show that in 1549 every town on the Fife coast was ordered to “furnisch” its proportion of “400 pioneris,” for

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\*† John Dickson, F.S.S.

‡ Sheriff Mackay.

16 days at 2s per diem, to build a fort on Inchkeith for resisting "our old enemies of England." In 1614 the secret Council commissioned Eustatious Robertson to bring with his boats from the Bailies of Burntisland to Leith "suche peecis of airtaillerie as were within the toun of Bruntyland." In 1627 an improved defence of the East Coast and the Forth was seriously considered. The question was committed to the Earl of Kinghorn (his residence of Glamis Castle<sup>††</sup> was still standing in 1687, when Sibbald refers to it as "the tower on the hight"), Lord Malvel (of Burntisland and Monimail), Sir George Areskine of Invertiel, Earl Morton, and the laird of Balmowto." They were advised that it was necessary to fortify Aberdeen, Montrose, Burntisland, Inchgarvie, and Leith. Experts sent to Burntisland gave in a report on Sept. 13th:—"We having met at Burntisland . . . haive inclynit to the opinion of James Traill, who thinks thair must be two bastions, one on ilk side of the entrie of the harbourie . . . and ane fort upon the hill above the toun, whiik we have viewed, and seen to command Harbourie, bastions, and haill toun and other pairts about it, together with some other little defense within the Harbourie for muskettters. And forder he thinkes the mouth of the Harbourie suld be cloised with one bomb or chain." These fortifications were to be paid for by the county.

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<sup>††</sup> I assume this castle to have been the Royal Castle renovated or rebuilt in 1538. There were *two* castles, no doubt of that, but in succession on the same site and re-christened.

More and more as time went on the riches and wonders of the Indies and Americas engaged the attention of navigators, speculators, and adventurers. Many items in the Privy Records show that Burntisland was contributing to the success of Britain on the seas. As examples:—In 1626 Andro Watson, captain of the Burntisland ship called “The Blessing” was empowered to arm and attack Spanish ships; and the same year “one of the 3 war ships his Majesty has bought is now at Burntisland under charge of David Murray waiting for its compliment of mariners.” In 1628 there were constant complaints about the behaviour of the soldiery at Burntisland awaiting transport. Many entries previous to this, and for about 100 years, were about ransomes for captive mariners. In 1620 the Privy-Council directs a letter to the “Archbishopp, Bishoppes, and Presbiteryes” as well as all public bodies:—“Quhairis Robert Cowane, maister of the schip callit the William of Bruntylland . . . haveing laidint his schip with a kynd of fische callit pilchertes in Yreland and being bowne thairfrae to Alicante in Spayne ane Turkish carvall of sax peece of ordinance boordit him about the break of day or ever he wes war of thame, and caryed him his schip and equipage to Tittiewane upoun the coist of Barbarie quhair the said Robert and sax of his company was sauld to the Moires (Moors) and his schip and laidning wes transportit thairfrae to Algeires and desponit upon thair and the moires to whom the

said Robert and his sax miserabill fellowes was ransomed thaim to thrie thousand and twa hundredth merkes . . . and in the meane tyme the said Robert and his company ar used as miserabill slaves and are putt to wark in a milne quhair they are straitlie halden at worke daylie fra the licht of day till night. Nothing but a litell dustie breade and watter, and ar schoite in a hoile under the earthe without bedding, yea, not as much as a handfull of stray to ly upoun.” In 1674 the Council was appealed to on behalf of three sailors held by the “Turks at Salee,” one of whom belonged to Burntisland, and the Council behaved nobly, contributing 600 dollars— $\frac{1}{3}$ rd of the total ransom. This Salee was a notorious nest of pirates. In 1675 Burntisland received an order from the Privy-Council to collect for John Kid and other prisoners among the “Turks.” A large sum was collected, but the landwart would give nothing. Probably thought John Kid should have stayed at home. However, it was arranged to try them again “at ye kirk door on Saboth.” This turned out a capital notion. They put their names down for £16 14s. In 1703 £36 was collected at the kirk door towards the ransom of Dysart sailors captive in Algiers.

From 1638 the clouds of the great civil war gathered darker and darker over the land. In this year two ships for Aberdeen entered the harbour, suspected of having “pouder and bullat,” and were

detained. The inhabitants at this time went about their ordinary vocations armed with sword and dagger. In 1641—"Forasmuckle as Sir William Armyne has represented to the Counsell that one William Hamon, Englishman, maister of the ship called the William and Judith of Lunden, has gevin out that when at sea he will turn pyret, the Lords of the Privi Counsell ordains the Baillies of Bruntyland, where the said William Hamon and his ship lies, to arrest the said ship and not to suffer her to go away till first the said William appears that order may be taken with him, and ordains the Baillies to tak the whole sailes of that ship from the roes until they hear further ther-inent." In 1643 General Leslie was in command of the Scottish troops engaged against the Irish rebels, and various individuals in Burntisland were not slow to back up the expedition. In the Privy Records a "George Jardin burgess in Bruntyland" gives an account of what he had collected in 1643 "to relieve the army in Ireland":—Robert Richardson v<sup>c</sup> (500) merks, Thomas Gourlay v<sup>c</sup> merks, Andro Watson j<sup>m</sup> (1000) merks, and Patrick Angus ij<sup>c</sup> (200) merks." And again in 1649:—"George Garden baillie in Bruntyland £600; Robert Richardson 500 merks=£333 6s 8d; John Lord Melvill 5000 merks=£3333 6s 8d; James Melvill of Halhill 2000 merks=£1333 6s 8d; Andro Watson in Bruntyland on thousand merks; Thomas Gourlay 200 merks, Patrick Angus 500 merks."



In a portion of the Records now absent Speed found that in 1639 the fort on West Broomhill was provided with 22 men to man the guns, and 25 men volunteered for the army in the South. At this time the camp of the Covenanters of Fife was formed at Burntisland, and the Duke of Hamilton with 19 ships made a demonstration in the Firth in favour of the King. In 1640 ammunition arrived from Holland, 15 men were sent to Colonel Leslie in the South and others to Colonel Munroe in the North. Every fourth man was ordered out to defend the town, and every person worth 200 merks (49 in number) had to furnish himself with a horse. Some men who ought to have joined the Earl of Dunfermline's regiment, and did not do so, were made to stand at the Kirk door with rock and spindle, and then banished. In 1641 further additions were made to the fortifications and Kirkcaldy ordered by the *General Assemblée* to assist. All these guns, ammunition, and men were to help the Covenanters. This becomes plainer and very near home when in 1645 all fit to serve were to be ready to help Dundee against the Atholmen, and shortly after men were sent to Kinross to oppose the "Irish rebels." Montrose was now carrying everything before him in the North on the side of Charles, had taken Perth and Aberdeen, and wound up by defeating the covenanting army at Kilsyth, killing between 4000 and 5000. From now onwards till Cromwell's arrival the Records are filled with

matter more or less connected with war, and it is strange that these preparations, begun and carried on for years on behalf of the Covenant, should at the end be directed against Cromwell. In 1646 part of Lord Cowper's regiment, encamped in Falkland wood, was moved to Burntisland, and in 1647 a Captain Logan was appointed over the military in Burntisland. In 1648 all are "invited to help to draw ye guuns off ye earncraig." George Brown is to be "Captaine of ye fencibles" (town's militia), who are ordered to meet fully armed at 8 a.m. "at ye kirk yard." A very depressing place. On Sep. 9 "All fencible men were warned to wear their swords, and all the great guns about ye toun to be mountit, and sergeants electit."

As the headsman of the black mask held up the head of *Charles the Martyr*, on that cheerless winter morning the 30th of January, 1649, a great tide of feeling set in against the roundheads. Schemes for the return of Charles II. were immediately set on foot. There is frequent mention in the minutes of negotiations between the Scottish Estates and Charles on the Continent, and after his arrival in Scotland in 1650. One of these records is a payment on account of "the King's ship." Sheriff Mackay notes that at this time Charles made a brief tour round Fife. An entry early in 1652 refers to this tour:—"Sixteen pounds ordered to be paid to John Brown for wine and other furniture expended in his house to the toun

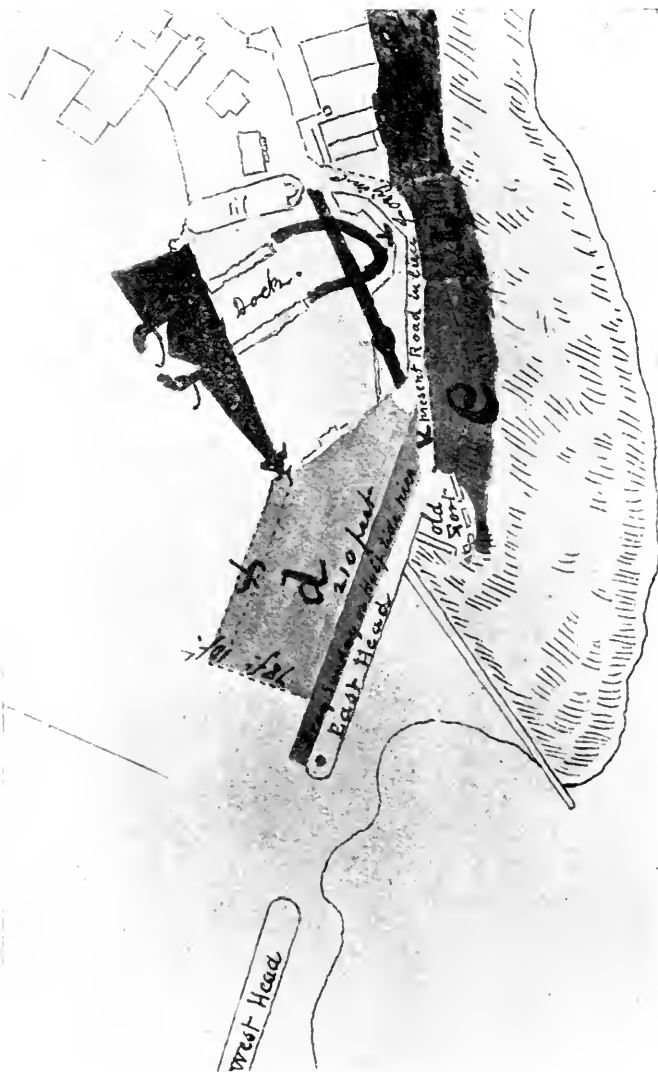
when the King was travelling with his servants.” The same year the town was ordered to pay a month’s assessment along with the other burghs for the expenses then incurred. On 29th Dec., 1656, occurs:—“ £100 pairt payment for bringing home ye King.” Charles had again taken to the Continent after the battle of Worcester. On 16th May, 1660, a letter was sent to the Town Council from the Provost of Edinburgh saying that Parliament had resolved “to bring home the King,” and requesting them to vote for a Commissioner to be sent from the Fife Burghs on 29th May at London (Charles II. entered London that day), and to bring with him the town’s part of £1000 for promoting the King’s interest. A proclamation was also issued beginning—“Forasmickle as several persons disaffected do wickedly speak opprobrious words,” etc., they are to be summarily apprehended for treason.

To return to March 1650, the holder of the “North comon lands (East and West Broomhills) petitioned for a reduction in his rent on account of the building of the Forths.” There had always been a fort on west “brumehill,” and the complaint about it would be either because it was extended, or because of its occupation the hill would be liable to more traffic. The plural in itself shows that there was a second fort on the East height or “Hillhead.” They would not be both on the West. On 15th July men are ordained to take ordinance out of ye ships within ye har-

borie and to mont ym on ye forths." At the same time 26 men were sent to "ye armie," and the militia Captains, Brown and Ged, ordered to call out the "fencible men against invasion." On 7th August "Deals and stanes" are provided "to big houses and courts of yards at the forths at ye Clayness (Lammerlaws point) and ye eist." On 27th August men were sent "to take ye gunns out of ye ships, and place them upon ye hill head, and to man ye fortis." (Cromwell had now invaded Scotland and, after being repulsed from Edinburgh, retreated to Dunbar, where the Scottish army placed itself in a very favourable position across his road to England. The pressure of civilian, ministerial, and amateur advice obliged Leslie to leave his positions on 3rd September and attack the wily Oliver, when the Scots were totally routed.) Four days after this disaster a minute of the Council shows that the military authorities reported that for a proper defence of Burntisland 500 men were necessary, and in October "Captain ——— arrived with a regiment of artillerie." The men were quartered partly in the Tolbuith—which had been fitted up and "whitewashed" for the purpose by order of the "Convention of Burrochs," who were to pay part of the cost—partly with families in the town, and partly in temporary structures. The Castle was used as headquarters. Some of the minor officers made a to do about the quality of the food provided, and were very troublesome. Peace was restored by the Council

threatening to put them outside the town! During the time the quartermasters were being pressed to "keep ye people at wark on ye fortis," and at length the Council decided to employ women as well as men to expedite the work. But a complaint was now made that the Council had no money to pay the people with, and, on 9th Dec. Colonel Major Leslie visited Burntisland and persuaded the Council to advance £500 Scots for this purpose. For some time "50 poor seafaring men" had been watching "the haill gunns about the toun, etc.," and were allowed daily "ilk ane twa pund wight of meal out of ye meal magazine"; and on 14th April, 1651, forty seamen were keeping "sentry in boatis" in front of the harbour. Two or three days afterwards several attacks were made on Burntisland by gunboats, as will appear.

In the foregoing we have the forts at the harbour, the forts at the Clayness and the East, and the forts on the North common lands. The exact position of several of these forts is known. That at the East Head existed as late as 1843, as it appears on a map of that date, in my possession, drawn by the late Walter Davidson. I have spoken to those who were present at the firing of guns from it in 1822 on the occasion of the arrival of George IV. at Leith. I believe two of the guns then in it are those at the Town Hall and Port. Some have thought these date from the Crimea, but that at the Town Hall was there earlier, and the other seems similar in design.



Plan showing East Head fort and that for "muskettiers."

I reproduce a portion of a map made for the late Provost Fernie, in a case against the town in 1804, which shows the East Head fort to have had three embrasures. On the same map, on the further side of the words "road in lieu of original," are the foundations of another fort, probably that spoken of in 1627 as necessary for "muskettiers." The lie of it is just suitable to resist landing parties, and more particularly to sweep the only level portion, on the left flank of the defenders, by which a body successful in landing could gain access to the town. This fort appears on Davidson's map and is *marked* fort on the map in the Public Library presented by Mr Stevenson. The third fort was on the high part of Lammerlaws point—anciently Clayness.\* Mrs M'Omish, now in her 99th year, remembers when the slight mound round the edge was several feet higher with apertures for guns, and was variously called Oliver's Knoll or the Devil's Punch Bowl. Those were the days of punch bowls. The Devil, "that patron saint of leisure hours," followed the fashion magnificently, and we no longer wonder that using a bowl of this capacity he required the "lang toon" of Kirkcaldy for a lair; we rather wonder he got so far. It is said the witches were burned on *Gallows* Hill near by, but I think *Gala* is more

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\*This picturesque promontory was recognised as important as early as 1595. An entry then in the Privy-Council Records runs:—" . . . appointed keepers of the haven Brintiland and Clayness: David Clark and Johnnie Clappen indwellers of Brintiland."

likely. Anyhow "it was meet" that this headland should be thought suitable for a vitriol works. These works, occupying with their workmen's houses a great part of the Lammerlaws, were of considerable importance, and pains were taken to keep the methods of manufacture secret. The Company had a copper coin or token, now known as the Burntisland halfpenny, with the date 1797 on the reverse. The Gateway, a house, and ruined kiln are still to the fore. There is nothing to show where the other fort on the east of the town was, nor of that on East Broomhill, but the glacis of that on West Broomhill is plain enough, a natural slope near the summit having been artificially evened so as to allow no foothold, and the crest in front of the guns being sloped like that of a ravelin, to command the foot of the hill. It is not clear if the fort on the West Head or Island, advised in 1627, was built, but tradition has it that the name Half-Moon given to the house at the entrance to Cromwell's Pier was derived from a defence there called the Half-Moon Battery.

As regards the number of guns in the forts, Cromwell's statement that he had taken three or four small men of war and 30 or 40 guns, is very indefinite. Were the guns in the men of war or in the forts? As already seen, the Harbour mouth and West Broomhill were permanent fortifications dating from 1627, and the latter was manned in 1639, and must have had its complement of artillery, so that the guns dragged from the Earn



Craig in 1648 and those taken out of the ships in July and August 1650, to be mounted on the "Forths" and "Hill Head," were not for them. Then the forts at the "Clayness and ye eist" appear to have their guns on August 7th. In Sept., 1650, there were four known forts for great guns, with possibly other two, the West Head and Half-Moon—say six. Six forts with three guns apiece is 18 guns. But it can be seen in the Council Records that after the Dunbar rout great efforts were made to make the place truly formidable. As Cromwell came nearer these efforts increased. I find from the Privy Council Records that in 1651 fourteen more guns were added to the fortifications:—"Anent ane supplicature presented be James Hill, skipper in Queensferrie, desyring a warand to Major General Morgan for causing deliver to him fourtein gunns, taken out of the vessel called the Hopeweill of Kirkcaldie, in anno j<sup>r</sup> vj and fiftie ane (1651) and placed upon the forts of Bruntland . . . which being seized upon be the Inglishes are now in the cittedaill of Leith . . ." The estimate of 18 added to these 14 makes 32, a number so suggestive of Cromwell's, as to make it almost certain he was speaking of the guns in the forts when he gave "30 or 40."

## CHAPTER IX.

## AND AGAIN WAR.

It appears from Cromwell's letter on his plan to reach Perth and cut off the supplies of Charles at Stirling that the possession of Burntisland was indispensable, and Mackay says Major-General Sir John Brown had also this view, but unfortunately seemed to think that it would be taken by landing troops, and therefore had his small Scottish army disposed to meet this. But Oliver would know that though he might reduce the town from the sea there was no room for manœuvring an army behind Burntisland.

According to Carlyle, Blackness being surrendered (Lamont says in the end of March), Inchgarvie was beset with gunboats previous to the 16th April, and at the same time orders were given to attack Burntisland by sea. As we have seen, on 14th April 40 seamen were keeping sentry in boats outside the harbour. On 19th April there is a report from the correspondent of the *Daily Intelligencer*:—"We heard the great guns go off apace from Burntisland. Our men with the boats made two attempts upon it." Next day he writes:—"The ships with Leith forces continually alarm Burntisland, making shews to attempt the taking of it." Barbieri says Burntisland was first at-

tacked by a flotilla of gunboats, but they failed. No doubt Cromwell fully intended from the first to carry his troops over at Queensferry, fight a battle on chosen ground, and proceed to the heights in the rear of Burntisland which commanded it. It is evident from Carlyle that though Cromwell lay ill after the Capitulation of Edinburgh that he was having material and transports collected at Leith ready to begin operations at Queensferry after the fall of Blackness Castle.

On the 17th Colonel Overton crossed the Forth at Queensferry with 1400 foot and some horse, and on the 18th and 19th Lambert followed with two regiments of horse and two of foot. On the latter date "baith men and women" are still working hard on the "fortis" at Burntisland. Next day (Sunday) the battle of Pitreavie was fought. Cromwell wrote—"2000 were slain . . . an unspeakable mercy . . . " and concluded by hoping to be "delivered from the oppression of man." Immediately after Pitreavie, Cromwell marched on the south side to Bannockburn, "hearing that the enemy were marched on the other side towards our forces in Fife." But hearing of Cromwell's movement, they returned hurriedly and reoccupied the works at Bannockburn. Cromwell then finding it not advisable to "attempt the works" returned to Queensferry, and shipped a further portion of his army into Fife, his settled idea now being to interpose his army between

Stirling and St Johnstone (Perth) when Burntisland had fallen.

The morning after that awful Sunday at Pitreavie Burntisland Town Council had an attack of the nerves, and forthwith dispatched "Andro Hutchison to the King's Majestie (at Stirling) to represent ye great danger of this toun being taken be ye enemie" and wanted to know "what we shall doe if we be assaulted." On the 24th extra soldiers from Dundee arrived, and Barbieri says 100 celebrated archers were sent from Perth, "dead shots at 500 fathoms." A long bow to draw.

On the 27th Oliver's army was encamped in front of Kilmundy and Place House in the rising part of the field called the English Knowe to this day. Water stood permanently in the hollows now drained into the trough on the high road. Some communication had taken place, as on the Council meeting, two of their number are "ordained to speak with my Lord Burgly" (perhaps Lord Berkeley), after which they colly appoint "a common breaker of unfreemen's flesh," and a Commissioner to the "General Assemblie" at St Andrews. The town must have capitulated this day, the 27th, as Cromwell dates a letter on the 28th at Burntisland, having crossed from Leith. On that day two Bailies and 13 Councillors met, but no business is recorded—merely their names. On the 29th Cromwell writes another letter from Burntisland to the Speaker:—

“ Sir,

The greatest part of the army is now in Fife waiting what way God will further lead us. It hath pleased God to give us Brunt I-land, which is very conducive to the carrying out of our affairs. The town is well seated, pretty strong, but marvellous capable of further improvement . . . Harbour at high tide is near a fathom deeper than at Leith. . . . We took 3 or 4 small men of war and I believe 30 or 40 guns. Commisary Gen. Whalley marched along the sea side in Fife . . . The enemy's affairs are in some discomposure. . . . Surely the Lord will blow upon them.”

One would like to know the terms of surrender “exacted” from Cromwell. In Lamont's Diary occurs the following under date July 29th, 1651: —“ Bruntillande did render to the English armie, the garesone ther had libertie to goe foorth with fleeing coullers and bage and baggage.” Farnie gives a local joke that the capitulation was precipitated because the first shot fired entered a china shop owned by the Provost. Every writer has repeated the story that Cromwell promised to build what is called Cromwell's Pier and to pave the High Street. He certainly originated neither. The pier then named the West Bulwark was there in 1600, and in 1646 the Council Records show that it was undergoing extensive repairs with wood and stone. Speed shows that after the surrender a small amount of national taxation usually paid by the town was allowed to be applied to the repair of the harbour, and—for one year only—a small grant from the exchequer, equal to six months' assessment, amounting to £33 sterling. The town's proportion of the repairs to the harbour came to

£584 sterling. Even Sheriff Mackay writes of the paving of the street as due to Cromwell, but I have seen entries about this long before the siege. The County urged it for long, and were to share the expense. In spite of the Council's hands being full with the fortifications, under great pressure from the County authorities, the Council on 9th December, 1650, "resolved to big ane Calsay from ye Tolbuith to ye eist port, and ordained two loads of stones a day to be brocht in." All the same, though the paving was begun, it was not until the end of 1651 that a contract was accepted to complete the work. Lamont writes in 1652:—



Ruins of Lonsdale, Cromwell's house (with the permission of Miss K. J. Kirke).

“The towne of Bruntileande began to be cassaed upon the towne’s charges; a great part of it was finished this year. It never rains but it pours! in 1659 ‘A Calsay’ was built in the Back Street with a ‘gutter in ye midis.’ ”

Cromwell could barely have been more than the two days mentioned—28th and 29th July—in Burntisland, as on 4th August he writes from Leith advertising the surrender of Perth, on August 2nd, at which he was present, and saying he was “hasting up” southwards with the main body of the troops now in motion. It was the news of Charles’ dash for the South which obliged him to leave Scotland. Cromwell is said to have lived in a house, now demolished, at the Grange Quarry. His departure was a relief to the Council, and they would have been still better pleased if his works had followed him. On 6th August—first meeting since the surrender—there is a deep grumble at the great charges “be ye English garison heir.” This grumble continued for nine years, through the Commonwealth, Cromwell and Richard, till some time after the Restoration.

The stereoscope from which the illustration of Cromwell’s house is copied was taken about 1860 by the late Robert Kirke of Greenmount, and is one of a series of the neighbourhood made by him, some of which, like this, are now of great interest. The position of this house, at the Grange quarry, was in the immediate rear of the English

Camp, and on the road to St Johnstone, as Cromwell called Perth, and for which he set out probably on the 29th July. It was, therefore, just where a general in the field, with not a moment to lose, ought to have been. The notion that Cromwell slept at the Castle has arisen solely from the fact that the Castle was for many years the headquarters of his garrison.

The garrison of the Commonwealth (1652) consisted at Burntisland of three companies of 100 men each, partly horse, partly foot. The Castle was their headquarters, and the first commandant Colonel Lilburn. He was second in command in Scotland under Deane, and completed the subjugation of Scotland by his invasion of Argyle. He succeeded Deane as Commander-in-Chief in 1654. There was a Captain Rogers in the Castle in 1656.

From 1638 to 1651=13 years, Burntisland had been having more than the usual share of war's alarms, and one would have thought some comfort and peace would be got, but it had still nine long years of military rule. It was a fearful tyranny. No one could cross the ferry in the town's boats without a permit from the military. These boats were used for military transport under promise of payment which was never made. Forty-two years after the Restoration Bailie Ged reminded the Earl of Leven that nothing had ever been paid Burntisland for these transport services. The Tolbuith and every house in the town was crammed with



“Inglishes.” The “maintainance” tax on the better class of burgesses, to help to feed these, was very serious. The minute books are filled with cases against the soldiers for “cursing and blaspheming the baillies,” assaults by them, even murders, and petitions to have them removed. Lamont gives numerous instances of the raiding done by troopers from Burntisland to different parts of Fife for the purpose of seizing men, horses, and arms. In 1659 Captain Marviell was at the Castle, and a complaint was addressed to him about “ye officers and their wyffs and bairns”—the latter evidently being looked on as the last straw—and the rents of the “courts of yairds” (probably temporary stables) not being enough. As late as 1660 Bailie Moncrief is sent to Major-General Morgan to try once more to get the soldiers removed. It was only in July 1657, four years after the appointment of Cromwell as Lord Protector, that he was proclaimed as such, and then without outward signs of joy.

During the war with the Dutch, 1664-1674, the Council books are thick with demands for recruits for the army and navy. In 1664 the Privie Council orders the names of 12 men to be submitted for the navy, of whom 10 are selected; and in 1672 another 12 men. These are only examples of many. Early in 1668 arms were procured and paid for by the town for 45 men, of whom two-thirds were armed with “muskitts and bandolliers” and one-third with sword and pike. These men were part

of 205 militia provided by the town, 160 being armed by the Government. They had a uniform with colours, drums, and halberts. The name "militia" was now officially used for the first time, and while formerly the service was strictly local, the body might now be moved elsewhere. Its first march out was to Auchtertool. There were two captains—Bailies Ged and Dewar. The first step in the movement was taken on June 10th, 1667, when "the haill Burgesses and inhabitants fencible men" were "warned to compeir before the magistrates wh their armes in the Kirk-yard, at two houres in ye afternoone," or bring £20 of penalty. The town seemed to enter into these measures with enthusiasm, and for good reason; Burntisland itself, two months earlier, had been the special objective of a Dutch Squadron. The following is from the town's records:—"Munday 15 April, 1667, This Burgh being assaulted be ye comon enemye Sunday to Witt ane squadron of ye Dutch shippis who being by God's providence removed" the Council appeals to the Lord Commissioner his grace to provide ye inhabitants with arms and ordinance and ammunitione for ye fortis." Pepys in his diary under May 5th says:—"Sir W. Coventry tells me the Dutch fleet shot some shot, four or five hundred into Burnt Island in the Firth, but without any hurt, and so are gone." Even fireside fire-eaters were startled at this unlooked-for attack, as the minute sets forth that "some

fencible men did flie furth of this Burgh burgesses of this Burgh, some with arms some without arms." There was one man not caught napping, Captain Robert Dewar, who was able to supply the authorities with sufficient ammunition to assure the Dutch that if they landed there would be opposition. Shortly afterwards the inevitable account appears from Dewar "for poudre and balls for the defense of the town from the Dutch." New great guns and ammunition were immediately supplied by the Government.

The people yearned after peace to keep their shops, and in spite of their experience in unpreparedness for war, the first rainbow's lovely form banished dull care. In 1714, probably in view of the expected Jacobite revival, a committee was appointed to examine the town's arms. They reported that of 84 guns, 74 had no locks, 70 of these were otherwise not mendable, and of 12 guns of a different pattern with "12 pykes" most were bad:

The whole roused spoylled and altogether out of order." The year following—that of the Jacobite rising—a Government ship was in the harbour with warlike stores, and Lord St Clair of Dysart, who commanded some troops in the Stuart cause, getting wind of this, brought some men from Perth and managed to walk off with 300 stand of arms. This was not the only service Burntisland rendered, if unwillingly, to the "Old Chevalier." In 1715 the Earl of Mar, in his successful attempt to cross the Firth at Crail with 1600 High-

landers, occupied Burntisland, and made a great show of increasing the defences there, which had the intended effect of drawing the fleet of Sir George Byng to Burntisland, "where he cannonaded a battery formed on a height, and shelled the old Castle of the Duries of that ilk." There is a picture of this event in Cassell's *British Battles by Land and Sea*. Perhaps Burntisland may claim to be the last town in the British Isles to have suffered bombardment. Paul Jones visited the Firth in 1779, but, I understand, he never fired a shot. A providential storm drove him seawards and answered the prayers of the good Mr Shirra on Pathhead sands. The prayers of the righteous availeth much. If there were any righteous, Shirra was one. Mr Russell, of Edinburgh, tells me his great-great-grandfather, who was a bailie of Burntisland, often walked with his wife to Kirkcaldy to hear Shirra. On one occasion he fell asleep, when Shirra stopped and cried out: "Stand up, Bailie Scott, and that'll pit the sleepin' aff ye."

It is thus plain that privilege and penalty are complimentary, and side by side like the nettle and the "docken blade." The burdens imposed by the necessities of war were very serious from 1638 to 1715, both for local and national defence. The damage from Cromwell's occupation was immense. For raising the two companies of militia in 1668 the town paid £616 9s 10d. This was by voluntary contribution from the inhabitants, and it did not

square accounts. Every year men were demanded for the army and navy. In one year (1670) 16 men were sent to the army. In place of a man the Government accepted £48. So that 16 men worked out at £768. The price of a man was sometimes paid by charging those liable so much per head. On one occasion this share was 10s. The men were balloted for with dice. As an example of what went on:—In 1693 the fencible men were divided into 6 companies of 30 men each, and one out of each balloted for the army. Sixteen of their fellow-townsmen, fully armed, took them to Colonel Mackay's regiment at Cupar, but 5 of them were pronounced unfit. Other 5 were then "seized" (probably good men—the ballot does not distinguish). These were sent to the same regiment, now at Stirling, when one was found unfit. "On which the bailie who accompanied the recruits" gave Major Arnot 2 guineas "when the man was found to do."

## CHAPTER X.

## KINGORN MAGNA AND KINGORN PARVA.

The present Parish Church was built on account of the smallness and inconvenient situation of the church at the Kirkton, and by agreement with King James V. on his erecting the town into a Royal Burgh that the burgesses should build a sufficient church. David I. in 1130 granted to Dunfermline Abbey "the Kingorn which is the nearer to Dunfermyng." At this time the parish of Burntisland was called the Parish of Wester Kingorn, and Speed says that in 1243 the two churches of Easter and Wester Kingorn and the double parish were dedicated to St Adamnan. The Rev. Mr Chalmers, in his list of churches and chapels belonging to Dunfermline Abbey, describes the church of Wester Kingorn as being the Kirkton Church, Burntisland, and shows it to have been confirmed to the Abbey by Pope Lucius III. in 1184. He describes the church of Kingorn Parva (little) as being that of Kinghorn Easter, and by inference the Kirkton Church to be Kingorn Magna. Chalmers was conscientious and well acquainted with the old documents by which he came to this conclusion. Yet speed says the

Kirkton Church was the church of *little* Kinghorn, and Sheriff Mackay calls it St Serf, *parva*, Kinghorn. These authorities differing as to whether Easter or Wester Kingorn was *parva*, in the hope of clearing the matter up, I consulted the Pontifical of Bishop de Bernam, edited by Charles Wordsworth, M.A., the original of which, in the Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris, was used by the Bishop in consecrating or re-dedicating 140 Parish Churches in Scotland. On the fly-leaves of it are written the names of these churches and the dates on which they were consecrated. In Wordsworth's translation, under the year 1243, appears the following:—

“Ecel. de magna Kingorn. eodem anno xvj. Kal. Jun. ij (17th May)

Ecel. de parua Kingorn. eodem anno xiiij. Kal. Jun. ij (19th May)”

The Pontifical, therefore, does not show that *parva* was Wester, but the editor explains that “Kingorn *parva* was Burntisland” without indicating his source of information. Nor does De Bernam say that either church was dedicated to St Serf.

Dr James Gammack, of Drumlithie, was an authority on early Scottish church dedications, but I could find nothing about St Serf in his “Lecture on Hagiology before the Diocesan Club, Aberdeen.” However, I have no doubt he had something to do with fixing on the Kirkton Church as having been dedicated to St Serf. He addresses

his printed lecture to Alexander Penrose Forbes, D.C.L., Bishop of Brechin. Many years ago I photographed a page of an illuminated Irish Gaelic prayer-book which Bishop Forbes said was about 1000 years old. Bishop Forbes was a brother of the Rev. George Hay Forbes, incumbent of St Serf's, Burntisland, who certainly was the first to apply or restore, in modern days, the name of St Serf to the original church at Burntisland. Wordsworth gives Forbes the credit of first editing the text of the Pontifical; and Dr Lockhart, in his "Church of Scotland in the 13th Century," says Forbes had printed the Pontifical in his own press at Burntisland, called the Pitsligo Press. I have a list of 41 classes of type used in this press, including Hebrew, Arabic, Syriac, Armenian, Ethiopic, and Greek. Mr Forbes once told me of the delight he had experienced on perusing the original Pontifical in Paris, the very book used in 1243 by De Bernam in consecrating the church at the Kirkton, little dreaming that one day I would have to puzzle over it. (I may here point out that some authorities on church architecture think the present ruinous church was built in the 15th century on the site of the one here referred to). No doubt Gammack or Forbes decided that the Kirkton Church was St Serf on the ground that it was *parva* Kingorn Church, supposed to have been dedicated to St Serf. We must return then to the question, which of the two churches was *parva*. The extract from the Pontifical shows that Bishop



de Bernam was at Kingorn Magna on the 16th of the calends of June (May 17th), and at Kingorn parva on the 14th of the calends of June (May 19th). The reason for the first appearing in the Latin to be at a later date than the second is because the Romans, instead of saying "the 17th of the month of May," said that day was the 16th day counting backwards from the 1st of June. If the reader takes an almanack and ticks off June 1st and the last 15 days of May he will arrive at the 17th of May; and taking June 1st and 13 days of May, he gets 19th May. De Bernam visiting Kingorn Magna first, it may have *some* bearing on whether magna was Kinghorn or Burntisland. David Bernham, Bishop of St Andrews, did not begin this special work in 1243 at St Andrews. Lockhart shows that he commenced at the Borders in March, and worked his way gradually north, consecrating many church, until he arrived at Ratho, from which he continued along the south of the Forth westwards to Carriden (May 7th), and was at Airth, near Stirling, on May 10th. Seven days afterwards (May 17th) he was at Magna Kingorn, and at Parva Kingorn on the 19th. Where was he on the six days between May 10 and 17th? Did he go round by Stirling and Dunfermline, where he had not yet been, to reach Burntisland and Kinghorn; or did he retrace his steps on the south side of the Firth to cross to Burntisland, or Kinghorn? Judging from his methodical character, he would come by Dunfermline, and, even if he

came by Edinburgh, the direction of his journey favours the idea that he would take Burntisland en route to Kinghorn. In which case Magna Kinghorn would be Burntisland.

The two Kinghorns occur very frequently in the Chartulary of Dunfermline, but only at one place could I see anything to favour the view that *parva* Kinghorn was Burntisland. In a list of the Abbey's possessions made for taxing purposes, *parva* is given before *magna* in an apparent passage Eastward. But this may be accidental, as the method does not seem to be followed throughout.

There is a tradition that St Serf met his superior St Adamnan on Inchkeith, and was directed to convert the land of Fife. He would land at Kinghorn as being so much nearer than Burntisland, and if either of these places received his name it should have been that he began his missionary labours in.

As already seen, the Kirkton Church was confirmed to the Abbey by the Pope in 1184. Why, then, should De Bernam, on 21st Dec. 1240 (only 56 years later) grant it again to the Abbey? Lockhart says Little Kinghorn was granted on that date. Little Kinghorn *must* be Easter Kinghorn.

Sheriff Mackay thinks there would be a church at the Kirkton before 1130, and it has been thought that its site would be a little to the west in the adjoining glebe, as there are foundations there several feet under the surface. These, however,

are more likely to be the foundations of the manse. The minister lived at the Kirkton till 1657. Many coins of Charles I. and Louis XIV. have been found in and around these foundations. Recently Mr Ednie, gardener, came on a pile of them rusted into a mass of about 2 inches high, as if they had been made up so in paper. I have seen a coin obtained here about 20 years ago, which is a turner or bodle of Charles I. This coin continued in use during the Commonwealth, and it is possible that though the chief part of Cromwell's army, previous to the fall of Burntisland, was encamped higher up near Place House, a portion may have been here (the Roundheads looked on occupying and pillaging manses or churches as merely spoiling the Egyptians), and have left unintentionally these relics of their conduct. The presence of coins of the Georges must be accounted for otherwise.

On the night variously given as the 12th, 16th, and 19th March, 1286, King Alexander III. passed through Kirkton on his way from Inverkeithing to his Castle at Kinghorn. He would stop and perform his devotions in the church, an invariable custom with travellers in those days. A storm was raging and darkness had fallen when the King reached the Kirkton, and his retinue are said to have tried to persuade him to proceed no further. But Joleta, daughter of the Count de Dreux, his new Queen, to whom he had been married only a few months, was expecting him. No one now believes the King fell over the cliff. Had the

party crossed the hills, the accident and the King's position would have been guessed when the Castle was reached and the King then discovered absent. The route followed on such a night of storm and darkness would be the usual one, direct from the Kirkton to "No Thoroughfare," and by the beach to the shoulder of the Kinnesswood hill, where the old track ascended to the height of the present road. In the darkest night the shoulder of the hill would be seen from below against the sky, and on seeing it the impetuous Alexander must have ascended the slope about 50 yards to the left of the usual place. His horse would fall and in some way kill the King, just in rear of the rock called the "black stane." His companions would not know where he had separated from them, and even in daylight his body would be invisible from the track below. The tide was probably searched for him. A burghess of Kinghorn, but outlawed, Murdock Schanks, wandering on the hills above in the early morning, observed some unusual object behind the "black stane," and, descending, discovered it to be the body of the King. He carried the news to the Castle, and for this service Robert the Bruce bestowed on Schank's descendants the lands of Castlerigg, Kinghorn, which still belong to the family. This "black stane," before the road behind it, and the railway embankment in front of it, were constructed, stood 10 or 15 feet out of the slope.

Anciently the road from Aberdour, after ascending Mains Hill (*Le Mains* was an early name of the district east of it), passed the front of Dalachy Cottages, Newbigging, and Place House, and turned at right angles down to the Kirkton Kirk. The road thence to Kinghorn proceeded first to Meadowfield and skirted the foot of the slope in front of Binn House to Cot-burn-dale. Portions of this road were substantially built of stone, being round the edge of a marsh. The road appeared again along the foot of the Delves, and crossed the shoulder of the black rock east of No Thoroughfare. Later, when the road came from Meadowfield through the gap between Black Jock's Hill and the Knaps, there was still a wide stretch of water on both sides of the road. I have seen this on a map probably drawn prior to 1800. In the 18th century and till 1843 the road from Burnt-island to Kirkcaldy passed almost exactly over the road in front of Craigholm, by Gladstone Place, Kirkebank, and up the defile to the Golf Course, through which it passed over the present road there. A road to Kirkcaldy by the School Meadows or Harley Shot and Binnend is indicated in Watson's will of 1684.

## CHAPTER XI.

## PARISH CHURCH.

Architecturally, Burntisland Parish Church is unique—in Britain anyhow. Succeeding generations have ruminated over the origin of its design. Blunt, squat, radical, it seems to flout the schools from the Egyptian to the Gothic. If the so-called pagoda or commemorative tower of the Chinese had been square instead of octagonal, and but a single gallery in its tower, it would have served as a good pattern. This blend of the barbarous and the simple may have crept along the north of Asia to Norway, where there is a considerable number of ecclesiastical edifices, whose ground plan is square or circular, with the tower rising out of the centre, St Paul's fashion. This elemental form, comprising indubitably length, breadth, and thickness, appealed to the broad-beamed denizens of Holland, and evidently met with the approval of the Burntislanders. Tradition long declared the church to be an imitation of the North Church of Amsterdam, but it appears on inquiry there is no resemblance. It has recently been told me by two sea-going persons that an exact replica exists in Rotterdam.

I have attempted to verify this by addressing the minister of the Church of Scotland in Rotterdam, but have received no reply, though enclosing a three-penny stamp. It ought to be easy to find if there is such a church there, as it has recently become a local fashion to spend the annual holiday in one or other of the coast towns of Holland, taking one of the vessels now trading between there and Burntisland. I have seen a picture of St Catherine's at Montfleury, almost identical with our Parish Church.

The church, which was erected at the expense of the town was begun in 1592, and the walls and arches must have been finished in 1595, as the Council then decides on "ye reparation of ye new kirk," and to "complete ye stepill." All the same "ye stepill" was not completed till 1749, a small wooden belfry doing duty till then. Sir Robert Sibbald saw the church like this about 1680, when he described it as "a fine square structure with a pavilion roof after the modern fashion." This inability to proceed with the tower just at once may have been a blessing in disguise, for Sibbald relates elsewhere that "on Thursday, 8th November, 1608," when the mortar would have been barely set, "there was in Fife an Earthquake betwixt nine an ten hours at even, which lasted about a quarter of an hour, that it terrified all the persons within the towns of Couper, Newburgh, Dunfermling, Bruntisland, and others within Fife." "Ye reparation decided on in 1595

cannot have been carried far, as in 1602 “Ye bailleis counsell and commitee of ye said burgh being publiclie warnit be sound of drum and convenit in ye kirk . . . all in ane voice . . . that ye kirk salbe dressit and apparrollit within and montit with sufficient stane (pavement in the next minute) and weill furneicit wt sufficient seatis round about for men and wemin”; and to this end they agreed to put a stent on the “haill inhabitants.” But few fixed seats for general purposes could have been supplied. Few existed in the centre of the church till well into the 18th century, this part being reserved for the women folks of the craftsmen, who carried stools with them to each service. Mrs Balingall told me that even in her day there were many loose forms in spaces such as that at the entrance, first seated in 1862, and a good number of high-backed chairs, said to date from Charles First, in the passages. One minister, accepting a call to a better place, took as a memento six of these with him. He was ordered to return them, but if he did there are none now.

The roof was still unceiled in 1606, five years after the visit of the King, and in 1609 the Council contracted with two men “for sclaitting ye kirk roof for auchtfoir libs money scots.” The pulpit said to have been similar to that of Holy Trinity, Edinburgh, and the seat of Sir Robert Melville of Burntisland Castle, now used by the Magistrates, were both built in 1606.



Standing alone architecturally, Burntisland Church has claims to interest not to be shared in the fact that within its walls King James first indicated his intention of having a new translation of the Bible. In another respect it stands alone. It is the only Scottish church where the positions of *all* the guild seats remain distinctly marked, and where the insignia or appropriate pictures used by them still exist in their original positions, though in several churches the situations of one or two of the guild seats are roughly known and accounts remain of what the insignia or mottoes were. One only original painting of this nature of all these has been discovered—that preserved in the Session-house of Crail Parish Church. It had been used face down to repair the floor of the church in 1815, and was discovered there in 1878. A Mr Scott remembered it to have been in the sailors' loft. The picture, which is in oil, on a panel 17 inches by 11 inches, represents, according to "Memorials of Crail Churchyard," in which a photograph of it may be seen, a sailor "with an astrolabe." The instrument is, however, a quadrant. Though the loft of which this picture formed a part existed in 1656 the painting is assigned to 1756, I suppose mainly on account of the nightcap the figure wears. In the first half of the 18th century the wearing of nightcaps and other night-wear during the day became a fad. Even the fair sex got infected and enthusiastically decked themselves in spiritualised night

gear of various sorts. But seafaring folks, to circumvent the winds, have worn semi-cowls, resembling the well-known Kilmarnock nightcap, from time immemorial, and fishermen do so yet.

Had there been no Secession in 1736 and no Disruption in 1843, Burntisland Church would have been structurally altered out of recognition. At these dates the church was packed, and without this timely emigration must have been extended. And had the Session been financially fit when the alterations of 1822 were made, involving the erection of a new north gallery, the destruction of the carved and gilded canopies above the heritors' seats, a new pulpit, new pavement, painting, etc., at a cost of £800, they might have renewed the remaining three galleries to make them uniform. Most fortunately they could not afford even to have the pictures scraped off, and merely painted them over. The fact that plenty paint was used, and in repeated doses, in the effort to obliterate the pictures, served only the better to preserve them.

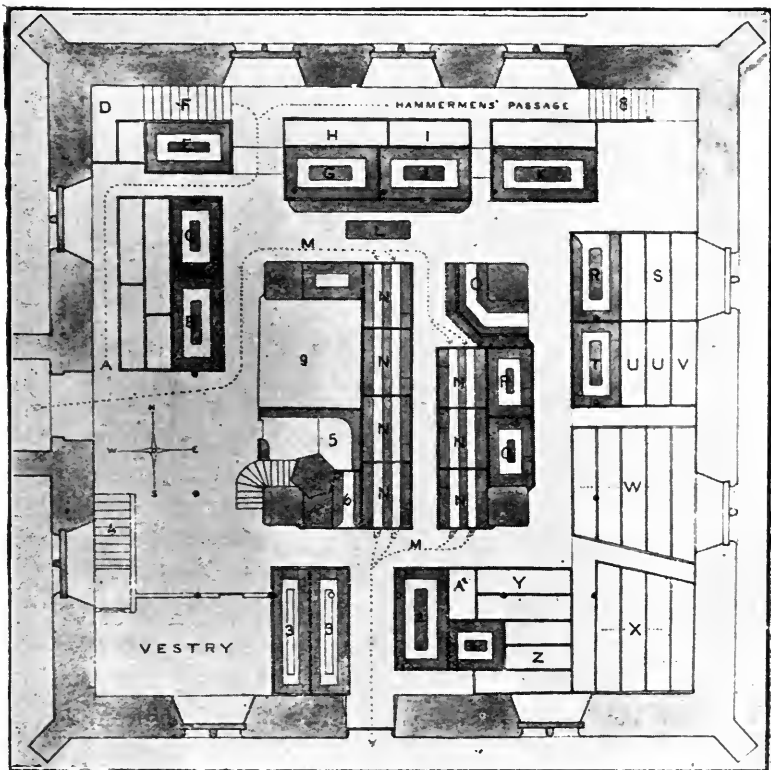
Of the carved canopies and pulpit there remains only one small piece, its preservation being due to the antiquarian instincts of Miss Kirk, Hilton, in whose possession it now is. Miss Kirk has kindly given me permission to photograph it, and a *facsimile* is here shown.

It has been the general belief that the summer house at Starleybank is of a



similar design to the original pulpit and lined with part of it. The proprietor, D. T. Moir, Esq., was kind enough to show me this interesting house, lined with beautiful old oak panels of various patterns, which would have been turned into firewood but for the care of Mr Hutchison, Session Clerk. However, Mrs Balingall, his daughter, assured me that the house was built just *previous* to

1862, when a great many of the pews had their fronts renewed, and the use of these for lining was an after-thought. Still, it is possible Mr Hutchison, deeply attached to the church with which he had been so long connected, may have possessed some portions of the pulpit destroyed in 1822 and have used these as well as those of 1862, which might account for so persistent a rumour.



Ground plan of Burntisland Parish Church, 1822.

## KEY TO PLAN

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| A. Passage to stairs F and 8.          | T. Whinnyhall.  |
| B. Minister's seat.                    | U. Sea Farm and Mills.                                    |
| C. Aytoun of Grange.                   | V. Nether Grange.   |
| D. Alexander Chaplin's seat.           | W. Weavers.   |
| E. Dunearn.                            | X. Fleshers.  |
| F. To tailors and schoolmaster's loft. | Y. Binnend.   |
| G. Grange.                             | Z. Dodhead.   |
| H. Grange—later Dick's Trust           | &. Grindlay's.  |
| I. Provost Speed.                      | 2. Council seat.  |
| J. Newbigging.                         | 3. Shoemakers.  |
| K. Ged's Mill.                         | 4. Stair to Guildry, sailors, maltmen, and Baxters lofts. |
| L. Temporary sacramental table.        | 5. Position of "Old man's seat."                          |
| M. Route followed by communicants.     | 6. Baptism administered in the passage here.              |
| N. Seats used at the Lord's Supper.    | 8. Hammermen's stair.                                     |
| O. Burntisland Castle.                 | 9. John Watson's seat in this space.                      |
| P. Proprietor of National Bank.        | A2. Strangers' seat.                                      |
| Q. Lammerlaws vitriol works.           | 10. Prime Guild stair (page 149).                         |
| R. Grange.                             |   |
| S. Dick's Trust.                       |   |

From descriptions of people still alive or recently dead, a plan of the church seats of 1862, and books of the Guildry, Hammermen, and Town Council, I am able to present an almost complete plan of the church seats previous to the alterations of 1822. The present pulpit and pulpit stair were built then. The old pulpit was not so high nor did the stair come outside the pillars. As the alterations or renovations did not change the sittings, we may consider that this plan shows very closely the state of the church sittings in

1727. Between 1700 and 1727 the seats D., H., I., those from Y. to the south wall, those behind B. and C., and several in the unknown space 9, were built. Those marked "X" were probably built after 1727. Were all these left out we would have a picture of the sittings on the ground floor as far back as 1683, when the weavers' and fleshers' seats were built. As shown in a preceding chapter, the Burntisland Castle seat (O)



Magistrates' seat—Formerly that of Burntisland Castle.

(sometimes termed the Royal pew, though not in existence on the King's visit) was built in 1606. Through the generosity of Mr Thomas A. Wallace this quaint and interesting piece of cabinet work has been carefully renovated and redecorated, under the direction of Sir R. Rowand Anderson, LL.D. The arms under the canopy are those of Sir Robert Melville, who as an extraordinary Lord of Session in 1601 went by the (law) title of Lord Burntisland, and Dame Jean Hamilton, daughter of Gavin Hamilton of Raplock, and widow of Robert, 4th Lord Ross. This lady was always spoken of in Burntisland as Lady Ross. Sir Robert Melville had been previously married, and died without issue. Yet Speed says he was succeeded in the Provostship of Burntisland by his son, Sir William Melville. As seen in another chapter Speed was mistaken. When the Castle passed from Sir James Melville of Halhill in 1664 to Sir James Wemyss, the seat must have been overlooked, as I find the Council addressed in 1673 by "The Right Potent and noble Earl of Wemyss" to "ratify the old agreement regarding the seat in his favour."

Exactly how this seat appeared previous to its renovation may be seen in my picture of the "Kirk of the Magistrates," in the possession of ex-Bailie Ferguson. The Burgh Arms on the canopy are an addition. The colours used in these arms are those of Fife, suggested by the late Marquis of Bute "because the arms of Fife

are the arms of the Earl of Wemyss and therefore those of Sir James Wemyss of Caskieberry, husband of Margaret Countess of Wemyss in her own right, and who was created a Peer in 1672 with the title of Lord Burntisland."

Among the books in this seat is a fine Baskerville Bible dated 1772, presented by William Ferguson of Raith in 1778, when he was Provost.

This is the only seat left which gives an idea of what the canopied seats along the foot of the galleries were like. It has often been stated that the woodwork of this seat, the canopies of the heritors' seats now lost, and the carved fronts of the galleries, were imported from Holland, carved and ready to fix up; and I have some confirmation of this from Mrs M'Omish, whose progenitor, Alexander Chaplin, shipmaster, brought the wood of seat D from Rotterdam cut to size. It had a canopy of which one stump is left.

Where the Magistrates sat before 1646 is not known, but in that year it is agreed to build "ane seat in ye kirk upon ye south eist pillare for ye baillies." Yet on Oct. 12, 1657, it is "ordained that ye baillies sit at a table befoir ye pulpit." Afterwards another motion is carried that "a seat be built in ye kirk for ye magistrates," etc. This was the seat 2 of the plan, and here they sat (with the whole Council on occasions) till a comparatively recent date, when the seat was given to the proprietor of the Castle



in exchange for his marked O, and in 1862 turned so that the long side should be against the wall, where it now is.

From time to time applications were made to build seats in the centre of the church, but with one or two exceptions, until the beginning of the 18th century, these were always refused, the idea being to retain this space for the women relatives of the guilds. After Cromwell's disappearance the families of the gentry ventured back from their retreats on the Continent, and this is evident from the offers to build seats. But the Council (1652) would allow no seats outside the "breast of ye loft," and the only seat in the body of the church at that time other than O, P, and Q was "ye old man's seat," sometimes termed "the range about ye pulpit." There were repeated complaints about it being crammed. In 1673 it was "ordained" that five persons named "and no others shall sit there without permission," and "the officers" were instructed to keep the door locked. This seat dated from 1633, when King Charles I. visited the town. Tremendous preparations were made in anticipation of his coming. "New suits of clothes were ordered for the two burgh officers, wines, comfits, and eatables provided for His Majesty, streets cleared of middings and red, and women and children ordered to keep within doors from morning till night.—(Speed's notes). So very reminiscent of the Sultan's proclamation when the

Princess Badroulboudour passed to the bath, that all shops should be shut and all persons retire to their houses during her progress. Let us hope that as Aladdin stole a sight of the Princess through the lattice, so the women and children of "Bruntyn" would take a peep at their King, little thinking that in a few short trouble-filled years that head of curls would be laid on the block.

Speed continues:—"Two boats were provided to ferry the King and his attendants from Newhaven, and all were to receive the freedom of the Burgh!" The method adopted by the King to avoid swearing fealty to himself is not recorded. Unfortunately it was stormy on the 10th July, and the rolling deep must have made a mess of the programme. Two men were lost on the passage, one of whom was John Ferries, the King's cook. The bodies were recovered on the 3rd of August. On that of "Ferries was found " £45 in dollars and other white money, 5 twelve pund pieces in gold, ane single angel," etc., in all £107 5s 4d; gold ring, rapier, belt and hinger. Item ane cot and breeks of camblet." With that in came the inevitable bills, and "the baillies think meet that the sums bestowed on his burial be paid to the following persons:—

To Andro Orrock for making his graif, 16 shillings.

Item to John White for ringing the bell, 16 shillings.

Item to Janet Mair and Elspat Coasin for winding him, 13 shillings.

Item to William Mitchel for washing his cot and breeks, 16 shillings.

Item to James Brown tayleour for 5 elms of linen to be his winding sheet, five pund 8 shillings.

Item to David Stirling for making his kist, 3 lib 10 shillings.

Item to warkmen for carrying him to the Tolbuith, 32 shillings.

Item to Alexander Barnie for first spyng him in ye wold, 31 shillings.

Item ane dollar to pay for the winding sheet of the other man found with him."

Compare this "ane dollar" winding sheet for the nameless man with that of Ferries at "5 pund 8 shillings" and "13 shillings" for putting it on.

The Bailies would be somewhat taken aback on Sept. 17 when the "Lord Admiral" came to anchor in Burntisland roads, and "desired the money and other effects to be given up to him." Negotiations went on till Dec. 14th, when the Council obtained the property found on Ferries "deducting alway 40 libs to be given to the Lord Admiral for his gude will." Verily! the want of money is the root of all evil. The "Lord Admiral" and the Council appear to have courted absolution by offering the balance—over £51, rapier, ring, etc.—to the Kirk Session—"and the

Council think it expedient that the Session build ane seat round the pulpit for sick (such) aged men as cannot well hear the minister's voice."

On March 28th, 1659, "Jon Watson," who instituted "Watson's Mortification," was permitted to build a seat on the "west side of the range about the pulpit." On 17th Dec., 1723, another was permitted near here which was to come to a door on the north side of the south-west pillar by which the minister entered the pulpit. An entry in the Council Records of 6th April, 1702, gives a great deal of information about the space under the south gallery. David Bonnar of Binnend was given liberty to build "a seat or pew"—Y on plan—in front of a round seat situated to the east of the magistrates' and strangers' seats—2 and A<sup>2</sup>. It was to be "level in front" with the magistrates' seat and straight east to the Wabster's seat—W; and the entrance was to be by the east end "breasting" the Flesher's seat—X. The strangers' seat appears to have had the property of entertaining unawares and in excess. In 1711—"Discharges any town's person, man or woman, hereafter to sitt in that seat commonly called the strangers' seat unless they agree wt the town's treasurer for to pay him twenty shillings Scots yearly each of ym for this liberty of the sd seat." Another seat "at the back of Binnend's" belonging to the town was let for "4 lib yearly."

In 1683 the "Wabsters" were granted the portion W for a seat. They had never been able to

find enough accommodation in the spaces in the gallery unfilled, but belonging to other guilds. On 14th May, 1683, "Ye baillies and Counsel all in ane voyce approve that ye weivers pay twentie marks for their seat in ye Kirk in ye south eist end of ye Kirk" on their representing that they were "hardly abell to pay ye warkmen for building of ye seat." About 60 years ago William Gairns, the last of the Weavers' Corporation, and his wife occupied the centre seat of this block—W.

On 23rd April, the same year, the "Counsel ordaines ye fleshers to give in twentie merks (yearly, I believe) to ye treasurer for ye libertie of yer seat on ye south syd of ye weivers seat." About 60 years ago "Sandy" Hutchison, the last of the Fleshers' Corporation, occupied one of these seats—block X. Something of a character, he brought a candle with him to see the small print, and complained openly of the low temperatures in winter, preferring then, he said, to read Burns at the fireside. Sandy had a disturbing habit of thinking audibly. On one occasion, in the middle of the sermon, he made some stir by suddenly remarking—"Man, Robin (the minister), ye're a haiverin' body."

It is not known when the shoemakers built the seats 3, 3, but application was made for their enlargement beyond the north wall of the vestry in 1695. Mrs Williamson, Bentfield, when a child was several times in them. She says they were

notorious for being rather narrow to get into or to sit comfortably in. If shoemakers err it is on the side of neatness.

The seat & was attached to the houses 14 and 15 Cromwell Road, belonging 50 years ago to a Mr Grindlay. Mary Somerville after her marriage to her cousin, Lieutenant Greig, is said to have resided in one of these houses, and may then have occupied this seat.

In 1724 "John Durie of Grange" wanted his seat made square. This was probably that marked V and named Nether Grange, though not yet square. Sibbald visiting Burntisland in 1699 writes—"Nether Grange hath a neat house and enclosures belonging to a gentleman of the name of Durie." As early as 1552 "George Durie gave to his brother Peter the lands of Nether Grange called le mains."

The square seat T was made by John Leslie of Quartier in 1655, with permission of the Countess of Wemyss, proprietress of the Castle. Quartier was the old name of a district between Dodhead and Whinnyhall belonging to the Castle, and appears in Blaeu's map, 1662.

The two seats U.V. behind were used by the tenants of the Castle Flour and Saw Mills.

On the seat R (the Grange) may be seen the stumps of the pillars on which the canopy was supported.

On 23rd Dec., 1723, "Robert Ged the laird of Baldrig" got the Council's grant to extend his seat K east to the north-east pillar of the gallery. The passage between his seat and that of Newbigging J was not to be interfered with. This Ged was a depute bailie of the Court of Regality of Dunfermline. He had been fined for attending a conventicle in 1674, and yet in his maturer age appears to have been a strong supporter of the "Old Chevalier."

It was in the seat behind Newbigging that Provost Speed, so often quoted in these lines, and his sister sat. The back of the seat was removed, and placed on the wall behind, on the abolition of the hammermen's passage in 1862. It bears the inscription :—17.JL.JH.42.

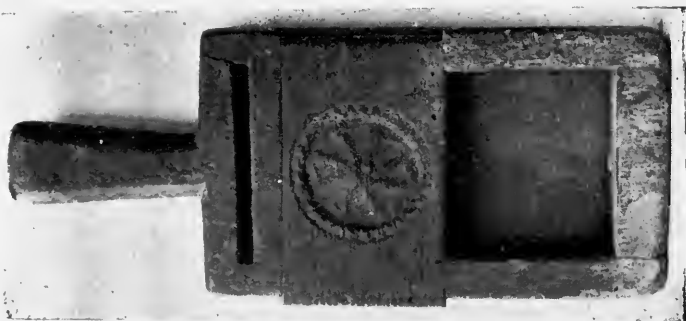
Seat D is interesting as having the inscription :—17.A.C.-E.C.27—Alexander and Euphemia Chaplin. Alexander Chaplin was a shipmaster, and a Councillor often referred to as absent with his ship.

The fact that only members of the guilds and their apprentices were allowed to sit in the guild seats accounts for the resistance to proposals for pews in the centre of the church, which was the only place available to the women. The only family pews, even under the galleries, were those of the heritors and minister until the beginning of the 18th century, when several bailies were granted the right to make pews for their families. One of these was that blocking the passage on the south of Q.&L.

The year 1725 was a record for these family pews, and those obtaining permission petitioned to have the right to their “*airs*” and successors for ever.” The Council thought this somewhat protracted, but ultimately took the risk, with the proviso, that in the event of their “remottest *airs* failing” the seat shall return to and be at the full disposal of the Magistrates and Council with the concurrence of the minister and Kirk Session.

At this period the seats behind B and C were added, leaving the passage A. In course of time the centre of the church was seated as exhibited in the plan, but in such a way as to allow of the communion being celebrated after the manner of the Bereans. L is a table, present only at communion, to support the elements, the ministers sitting in front of G and J. The dotted line M shows the route taken by the communicants. The seven square seats N were entered from the sides ordinarily, but on communion their detachable ends and partitions were removed, leaving two long seats with a centre table. This continued till about 1860.





Ladle for tokens.

Here is given a block of a curious ladle used in Burntisland Church to collect the tokens after the communicants had taken their seats. For offerings I believe the "brod" at the door was always used. The church possesses a number of these bronze collection plates, of which three are bas reliefs of the Annunciation, Glorification of the Virgin, St Christopher carrying the infant Saviour, respectively. There is an inscription on each, one of which the Rev. Mr Ruggan has discovered to be, "I bring happiness always." Some years ago I sent casts of these to the Scottish Museum, but the authorities there could not say what the inscription was, thought they dated from William of Orange, and did not seem to place much store by them. However, in the Glasgow Exhibition of 1911, there was a collection plate identical with ours of the Annunciation, said to date from the 15th century.

This would tally with the tradition that these plates were in use at the Kirkton Kirk, and are of Roman Catholic origin. It indicates an improved outlook that the Session have withdrawn these plates from use at the doors, where they were being battered flat by the weekly pecks of pennies and halfpennies.

It is said that not so very long ago the sand-glass, used to time the sermon till about the Disruption, was sold at a bazaar. It was about 12 inches high.

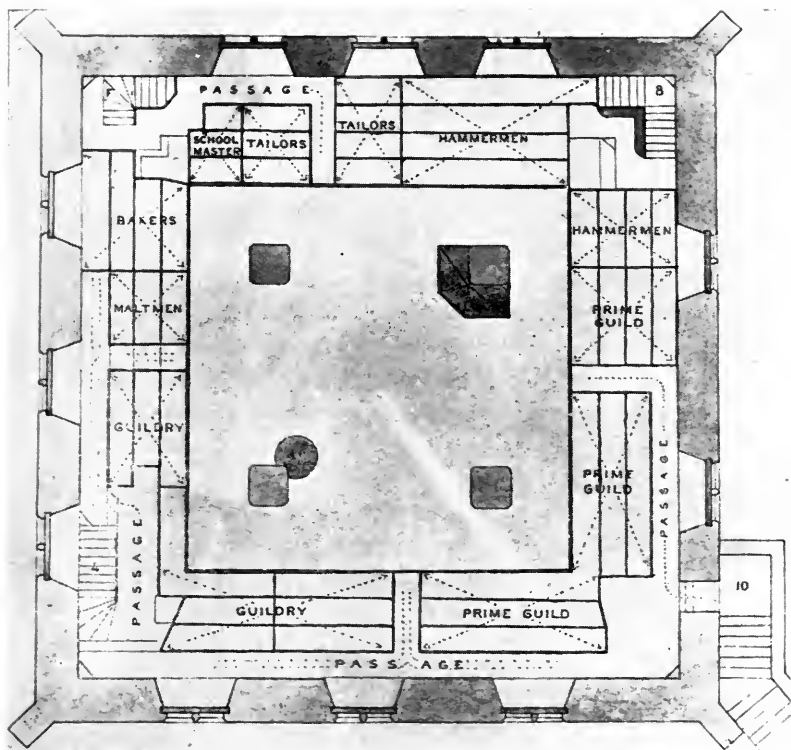
There is no inscription on the church bell, but it was recast by Mrs Isobel Meikle, of Edinburgh, in 1708, and the cost defrayed by public subscription.

It has often been said that a model ship was suspended from the hook above the east gallery. Mrs Balingall told me her father, for 50 years Session-Clerk, often spoke of it. It was not the model now in the old Council Chamber.

About 67 years ago three large chandeliers were used for lighting the church—one each in the north and south galleries, and one in the centre. That in the centre was lowered for lighting by means of a rope from the tower, and had two large circles of candles, one above and smaller than the other. Mrs McOmish tells she was present one night when the worshippers got a great fright. The chandelier made a trial attempt at aerial navigation, flying rapidly up and down. The boys who rang the bell, having skipped the sermon, and suspecting their

absence would not pass unrewarded, concluded they might as well be hanged for a sheep's lamb, and began dancing the candles up and down. These chandeliers were introduced in 1634. There have been single candles on the pillars and hanging from the front of the galleries. There was the end of a steel shaft through the centre of panel 8 south loft, from which a lamp might hang.

The south-east pillar was where offenders were placed. Speed writes that women convicted of having illegitimate children were condemned to stand there on a stool, in a white sheet, for as many as 26 Sabbaths! More hopeless cases were sent to the Cross. In 1601 Gill Watson, for calling the pastor a devil, was ordained to stand at the Cross with a paper on her head setting forth her offence. In dire emergencies the authorities could still make "the punishment fit the crime," as in 1665 two women were imprisoned till they would tell who were the fathers of their children. (Speed's Notes).



Plan of the galleries.

The plan of the galleries shows where the different guilds were located from 1613 to 1833, with the exception of the Hirers, who are said to have rented the seats in the West Gallery marked Guildry. This portion belonged to the Session and Prime Gild from 1621 to 1822, when it was resigned to the Session. It was only at a late date the Guildry used these seats, due probably to the hirers becoming less numerous or using the seats of the Maltmen, which body about the end of the 18th century was almost non-existent, and because of a great increase in numbers of the Guildry. Reading Hirers, then, for Guildry in the West Guildry in the South Gallery we will have an almost exact view of the *frontage* of the Gild seats from the completion of the galleries, which Speed gives as 1613. This unseated space between the Guildry and Prime Gild belonged to the Session and Prime Gild, and was let for loose seats, along with spaces behind, to several of the crafts not fully seated—the Shoemakers, Weavers, and Fleshers, who had no frontage. Due to the increase in numbers of the other gilds, space had to be found for these three gilds in 1683 on the ground floor. Since 1862 the division between the Tailors and Hammermen has slightly altered from that in the plan.

The passage to the “Pryme Gilt” lofts from the south-west stair continued until about 50 years ago, though the picturesque outside stair was made in 1679. In 1673 the Council agreed to pay part of

the expense of making this stair to the "masters' and seamen's lofts" on condition that a landsman be allowed to stand at the collection plate there. Could anything be fairer? The proposal to build the stair was opposed on a number of grounds—that "the Kirk was over-well built to be deformed;" that "it was rather a decoyment," whatever that is; "that it would let the east wind and rain into the church." As a last dangerous resort, "warkmen" were called in to see if this impossible thing could be done. They reported that it could, and would be a great improvement.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE GUILDS AND THE CHURCH.

Gilds there were when Greece was mistress of the world. In the middle ages all sorts were in great vogue—religious, social, commercial. The commercial at first included both maker and vendor. In Scotland the Merchant gilds have always been at daggers drawn with the Craft gilds, and the object of each, whether merchant or craft, was ever to "keep their ain fish guts for their ain sea maws." Universal thanksgiving was offered up in 1833 for what was thought to be the final

overthrow of the privileged merchant and trade societies in the burghs, yet their modern representatives, more widely diffused—syndicates and trade unions—seem a greater menace than ever to freedom of trade and freedom of service.

It is interesting to know that James V., who built our first piers and gave our first Royal Charter, and whose portrait in armour, Speed informs us, was the original Burgh Seal, took the part of the crafts as against the merchants in 1530, and restored their power to fix their own prices by deacons chosen by themselves; and, what was more fatal to the merchants, to sell their own manufactures if necessary. In 1555 Queen Mary advanced on this by giving the deacons the right to vote in the election of the burgh officials.\*

In Burntisland, early in the 17th century, the following bodies were permitted to have each a fund or "box" to bear the expense of prosecuting before the Magistrates those of their own class who did not contribute to their funds:—The Merchants, or Guildry (traders, shopkeepers, or shippers), the Pryme Gilt (shipmasters and seamen), the Hammermen (smiths, masons, and coupers), the Wrights, Tailors, Weavers, Shoemakers, Bakers, Fleshers, Hirers, and Maltmen.

This right to kill competition—"the life of trade"—within the Burgh was granted on condition that each Society supported its own poor.

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\*Thomson's Weavers of Dunfermline.

Only twice a year were outsiders (unfreemen) allowed to sell manufactured goods to the townsfolk, and then only on payment of the fixed dues or customs. These periods, extending to a week each, began on the feasts of St Peter, July 10th, and St John. The first is still observed in the guise of the annual fair, but for the last three years on the wrong date. Speed says the origin of these dues can be traced to fines imposed by the clergy for breaking the religious character of the feasts by trading. On three days a week, however, perishable commodities—beef, bread, and country produce—were allowed into the town on payment of dues, and sold *only* at the price fixed by the burgh officials, and *only* at the market-place, which was the Cross. As long as it did not interfere with their own trade, there were many eager to obtain the bargains of the unfreeman or blackleg, who could sell cheaper than the burgesses, not having their burdens, and in spite of the dues, if he could offer his goods privately at his customer's door. This was illegal. A baker fiercely resented bakers coming into the town and selling bread from door to door, where the prices could not be publicly acknowledged; but if some mutton was brought to him in this way, he changed his tune. Monopoly was not always maintained, however, even in the Courts. In 1789 a weaver from the Kirkton, discovered smuggling in a web of cloth, was heavily fined, and the cloth confiscated; but, on appeal to a higher Court, the fine and cloth had to be re-



turned. But the weavers were in a position legally giving them more chance of success in appeals than other outside tradesmen.

The proper entrance to the town for trading purposes in 1635 was by the East Port, which was erected then. Speed refers to the north and south ports. I have not seen these in the records, but North gate, South gate, Mid gate often occur—meaning, apparently, not an entrance but a street or thoroughfare. The East Port was demolished in 1843, and its extension marked by two inelegant pillars, now moved to the entrance to the Links. The illustration was constructed by me from descriptions of Mr Gibson Thomson, Mr James Morrison, Miss Dick, Miss Kelly, Mr Thomas Millar—all deceased, and all over 90 years of age—Mrs McOmish and Mrs Williamson. Miss Kelly owned the houses on the left, and made a drawing of them for me. Mr Millar made me a rough drawing of the gateway, which corresponded with all I knew. The picture was shown to Mrs McOmish and Mrs Williamson, who both recognised it. The top of the wall was covered in early summer with “Robertiwyllies”—wild wallflower—just as the Castle wall is yet at that season. I have myself seen the house on the right, and part of the wall with the dead window, said to have been the place where the portion of Halkston’s body sent to Burntisland was displayed. (Halkston of Rathillet was one of the nine Covenanters who murdered Archbishop Sharp. He was executed



The East Port about 1840.

30th July, 1680, his head fixed on the Netherbow, one of his "quarters" sent to St Andrews, one to Glasgow, one to Leith, and the fourth to Burntisland). The gate, of two leaves, had long disappeared. In early days it was opened at 4 a.m. and shut at 7 p.m. by the town's officers, who beat a drum up the High Street, or were accompanied by the town's "pyper" or "violer." The town's violer or pyper had a free house and 10 merks annually, and the sole right to teach music or provide it at marriages, dances, etc. The violer in 1679 complained to the Council that "violers bass and triple" came into the town and reduced his income. They were warned off. The foot-passengers moved down the centre of the street—"crown of the causeway"—which was made of flagstone, about 4 feet wide. The grandfather of Mrs McOmish used to relate that as a boy he played "hop, skip, and leap" over the joins in this pavement. The remainder between the gutters was cobbled (a small piece of this cobbling, with the gutter near the middle, remains in the Castle Vennel), while in front of the houses was a stretch of ground reserved for "middlings," carts, cocks and hens.

The Council books are replete with complaints about unfreemen entering the town endeavouring to work at the trades, and enactments against them. No person could enter a craft without being a burgess. As early as 1611 to become a "friman" or burgess cost "30 pund scottis" plus a banquet.

and to gain admission to one of the crafts cost as much as "24 pund scots." A burgess swore to be faithful to the King, to defend the liberties of the Burgh, and assist the Magistrates in the execution of their duty. He had to be of good moral character, of the true religion," to bear scot and lot, watch and ward, and be owner of a rood of bigget land. Sons and daughters of burgesses were free by birth; burgess women in exceptional circumstances, such as Cromwell's siege, being called to watch and ward. Sons of burgesses on entering a craft were charged only a nominal fee. In 1711 a new Act was passed imposing heavier penalties on unfreemen trading within the Burghs. Yet members of the trade societies were not free from blame. In 1668 a Captain Wemyss complained that a smith employed by him sent an unfreeman in his place, thus defrauding his fellow-craftsmen. Both men were imprisoned during the "Baillies' pleasure." A curious apology for smuggling appears in a petition to the Council by the "inhabitants" in 1726 "against the Baxters for their bred, the Cordiners for their shoes, and the Fleshers for the insufficiencie of their fleshes." The privileges of the freeman stimulated the arts, but in time the general public suffered severely from the want of reasonable competition. Even as early as the beginning of the 17th century James VI. in his *Basilican Doron* writes:—"The craftsmen think we should be contented with their work, how bad soever it be; and if in any+hing

they to be couroled up goes the blue blanket."

Though the eleven societies in Burntisland were recognised by the Council none were fully incorporated until 1683. After protracted litigation "Ye Counsell," on 27th August of that year, "all in ane voice ordaine Sealls of Cause to be granted to ye seven traids in ye Burgh . . . wrights, hambermen, talyeours, baxters, cordiners, and wivers." The Guildry, though the most important body—the Council being almost entirely drawn from it—was not fully incorporated until 1710, when it was given the exclusive right of trading. (The Dean of Guild as late as 1833 levied annual fines on merchants who were not members of the Guildry.) But it was not till 1732 that the proportion of craftsmen on the Town Council was finally settled by arbitration. The Council was to consist as before of 21 persons, 14 belonging to the Guildry, including all the Magistrates, and one from each of the seven crafts. The Prime Gilt, Hirers, and Maltmen were never incorporated.

An authority on ancient carved woodwork gives the style of carving on the galleries as Elizabethan. The west gallery, 39 ft. 7½ in., contains 15 panels, varying in width, and a section of one. The east gallery, 39 ft. 4 in., contains 16 panels, very various in width, one at the north end measuring only half the average width; and the south gallery, 38 ft. 10 in., has 14 panels fairly uniform in width. The difference in width of the panels

must have arisen partly from the galleries having been erected at the expense of the crafts at different times, and partly from the natural desire of each craft to make their panels end with the sitting space allotted them. The pilasters dividing the panels have been gilded, as well as the heraldic ornaments above them, which had been on a green ground (of which most of the yellow had faded) as restored around panel 10 south side. At the time the pictures were painted over it was very generally regretted, and could not be forgotten, as many of them still projected, in certain lights, from the surface. Enquiries were made by me many years ago at Messrs Dott & Son if the pictures could be uncovered, and they said they could; but it was only in 1907, when the columns and arches were re-chisled and the church re-decorated, under the direction of the eminent architect, Sir R. Rowand Anderson, R.S.A., and through the munificence mainly of Mr Thomas A. Wallace, then Town Clerk of Burntisland, that Messrs Moxon & Corphrae experimented with the sixth panel on the south side and demonstrated that the many coats of paint and varnish could be removed without endangering the picture underneath. The picture brought to light proved to be a naval battle, the principal vessel being Scottish, with the St Andrews Cross at the fore and the usual streamers waving from the yards. Over the mizzen-mast was a compass, and over the fore-mast a moon "decrecent." Portions of the

picture being absent, it was intended to hang it in the vestry, when I offered to fill in the parts wanting, so that it might be returned to its place. (The dulness of this panel gives an idea of the appearance of a number of the panels when found. Some were much less distinct and some quite fresh.) Thereafter Mr Wallace very kindly commissioned me to remove the paint from panel 8, east gallery, and restore it. I was successful in this, and since then other commissions have allowed of 24 panels being examined. Only six of these were blank—Nos. 11, 12, and 13 east gallery, 11 and 12 south, and 7 west gallery. Some of the pictures were so well preserved that they were merely re-touched. These were Nos. 6 and 9 south side, and 6, 7, 8, and 10 east side. The vermilion of the flags and streamers and nearly all the gold in No. 7, east side, is the actual gold and colour found. In many of the remaining panels, however, so much of the gilding and colour had disappeared that it had to be renewed. In doing this the original was not cleaned off, but is still there, with one exception, No. 9, east side, which was so split and worm-eaten that a fresh surface was imperative. But first a very careful transfer was taken and a study of the colour made.

In every case the original picture brought to light was seen by those interested in the work. The character of a number of them was quite unsuspected until the removal of the paint, so that

the process was highly exciting. There are still (December 1913) 22 panels uncovered, some of which ought to have pictures, as Mary Somerville describes the Baxters and the Weavers, neither of which was on the north gallery, now destroyed.

These pictures have no pretensions to being works of art. They are typical examples of the work done by a class of artist now extinct, but who were numerous in the days when it was fashionable for every shopkeeper or tradesman to hang a pictorial symbol of his calling over his premises.

Provost Speed in his notes writes that on the sides of the pillars were suitable texts for various occupations, with the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and the Apostles' Creed. When Mr Wallace offered to have the pillars restored it was hoped that on the removal of the layers of whiting and wallpapers, simulating marble or granite, in which they were buried, the texts, etc., would be again brought to light, but nothing was found. It is probable that these texts were painted on tablets and hung on the pillars.





## CHAPTER XIII.

## THE GUILD SEATS, PANELS, AND INSIGNIA.

On previous page is a *facsimile* of the first entry in the "Gild Council book of the Burgh of Burntisland," of which the following is a version:—

"In the name of God, upon ye twentie fyft day of December the year of God sixteen hundred and sevintene years. Conveined David Seattoune . . . Pickard Ross, Jon Geddie, Jon Boway, Alexander Forrester, John Sybbald, Jon Quhyt, and Jon Seattoune. For granting ane voluntare contribution weekly amongst ymselves during yis year to come. To such goods necessr . . . as shall be thought most expedient at yr nixt meitting They ilk ane for yr own pairts . . . Grantit and willinglie assent to give ilk weik during yis year as followis to witt David Seattoune two shillings money Scotts Pickard Ross ijs (2s), Jon Boway ijs Jon Geddie twelve pennies Jon Sibbald xij<sup>d</sup> Alexander Forrester viij<sup>d</sup> and Jon Quhyt viij<sup>d</sup> And thought fitt and ordanit ye sd Jon Quhyt suld begin upone Sunday nixt ye 28 of December instant to collect at ye morneing prayers and ctinew ilk Sunday yrafter and maik compt (who) payis and quha is restand."

Succeeding entries show that the Society existed in 1611, and the Commissioners in their report in 1833 say the merchants had a box in 1606. There were 10 members in 1611, and only three new members were added up to 1631. Up to 1668 there had been 23 members. When the book ends, in 1828, there had been 308 members. In 1832 there were 82 members, and the Society was dissolved in 1860. The cause of its increased numbers in the later part of its existence was due to membership being sought after more as an honour than from any expected trade benefit, and also to the reduction in the entry fees. In 1731 the Hon. Thomas Leslie (Provost) joined; in 1768 Captain William George Fairfax, commander of H.M. cutter "Greyhound"; in 1770 the Right Hon. David Rutherford; and thereafter all sorts and conditions—sailors, fishermen, fishcurers, boatmen, bakers, candlemakers, farmers, a watchmaker, etc.

The Society began with traders in materials in clothes, or what was called "merchant goods," and who claimed the right to "pack and peel" (export and import) within the Burgh. This claim was only fully enjoyed when a "petition for a Gildrie" was granted by the Town Council, 23rd January, 1710. The Council then appointed till Michaelmas "Robert Seton, Lord Dean of Gild," and six others as Gild Council. The following year the Dean and another were chosen by the Council; and, by and by, on the annual election of the Dean of Gild, he is directed to convene the retiring

Gild Council “and make choice of a new Gild Council.” The Gildrie at this time consisted solely of persons interested in the trade—skippers, shipowners, and merchants of all kinds—the capitalists of those days. They completely controlled the business of the town, and formed the bulk of the Town Council. It was not until 1732 that the seven incorporated crafts were each entitled by law to a representative on the Town Council.

From 1711 the Gild Council controlled weights and measures, the safety of buildings and their extension, public wells, streets, gutters, paving, and sanitation. The repeated visits of the pest or plague in the past century had given the authorities notions of cleanliness not to be despised. As early as 1602, to fight the plague—rampant in Leith and Kinghorn—fourteen bailies were created and twenty-eight assessors, to prevent intercourse of the inhabitants, or ingress of strangers. All cats, dogs, and “swyne” were destroyed, and all refuse burned. “Ludges” were erected at the south side of the Links to which the infected were removed, and the result was that Burntisland had comparatively few cases.

On 2nd February, 1710, John Seton, Town Clerk, was paid ten pounds Scots for an extract of the Gildrie Act, and the Town Officer 6s Scots for promulgating it at “Ye Croce.”

After the freedom of the box the two great privileges were the “loft in ye Kirk and ye morte-

cloath." The box, with their money and documents, was in 1668 of iron, with two locks and two keys. At each meeting it was decided where the box was to rest until next meeting, and who were to have the keys—"1670 . . ye box to be in John Ross his house. Item David Seton to have on kay and William Callander ye other." After 1666 there were usually six or eight old or sick men or widows receiving various sums according to the scale of contribution—a more manly principle than "something for nothing."

As the Society prospered more seats were built in the Church, houses and ground were bought, and considerable sums of money lent on bond, usually to the town. The Society possessed at least two houses in 1752, one of which was for their Gild Officer. In 1746, this official having lost his life by an old wall falling on him, the Gildrie were in a quandary what to do with his widow and family. They decided, in addition to an allowance, to let her occupy the house on the condition that "she provide a proper man to officiate for them." The widow, the bairns, and the Gildrie would all benefit by a "proper man."

In 1752 the Gildrie bought a grass park on the east side of the Kirkyard for £24 16s. It was let from then to 1761 to Samuel Charteris, solicitor of Customs for Scotland, grandfather of Mrs Somerville, and afterwards to her father Captain W. G. Fairfax. Frequent mention is made of this park

in the Council Records and Hammermen's book, under the name of the "louping diks." There was no road past the north wall of the Church, the ground at the gate end being six or eight feet higher than at present. The "dyke" itself, or its "yeat" was always being repaired or rebuilt, due to illicit traffic. In 1782 James Morrison made a new "yeatt" for which he charged 11s 3d, including a "coat of pent and oil."

The comforting assurance of being interred with one of the "mortecloaths" was in time improved on by hiring them out, and this was a source of considerable income. In 1766 there were four mortecloaths—a large one for men, having twelve yards of velvet with a fringe, and a smaller one for women. Either was let out for 5s. Another called "the maiden's," of black velvet and white satin lining, was 3s 4d, while a very small one for children was 1s 8d. The custodians of the mortecloaths were a long succession of Geddies, beginning with Marion Geddie.

At first the Gildrie had only one seat. In 1668 "It is agreit with David Stirling wright to ye Burgh that he shall repair ye Merchant's seat in ye Kirk with lock and kay of ye door . . . and for which work he is to have ye soume of sixtein punds Scots. He said he was a loser by it, and was allowed '20 punds.' This seat included the panel with scales to the corner. Shortly after this a second seat was built behind, and in 1705 a third

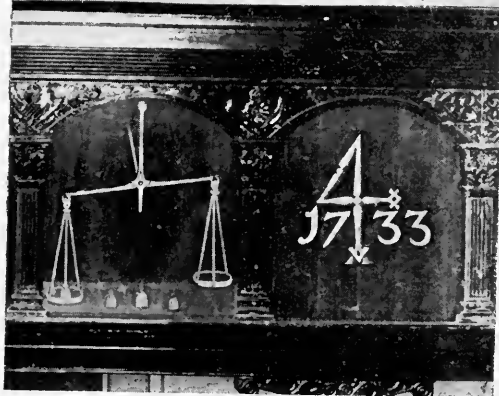
seat—"boulding a bak sot in the Kirk which comes to the scum of 20 poud 19 shillong." (The broad "Kircawday" speech is no doubt a survival of the pronunciation of Knox's time. James Melville writes "there was twa in Saint Androis wha wer his (Knox's) aydant heirars Mr Andro Yoang wha wrot his sermons . . . and . . . causit to wrait for what end God knawes.") In 1737 these three seats were lengthened eastwards about six feet, which includes two panels with dates there. Liberty to make this addition was obtained from the Kirk Session and "prymgild" on paying each member of these 10s 6d, and probably depended on some conditional arrangement between these bodies, entered into in 1621, when the amount of their several rights was fixed. The front seat, lined with green cloth and a fringe over the front, was reserved for the "Lord Dean of Gild" and his Council, whose officer unlocked the door for them. One of the officer's perquisites was two pair of shoes per annum. There were four Gildrie seats in 1705. The late Mrs Balin-gall told me that she had seen a number of the Gildrie sitting in the West Gallery. In 1784 the stair (4 in plan) was renewed at the expense of the Gildrie, Baxters, and Maltmen.

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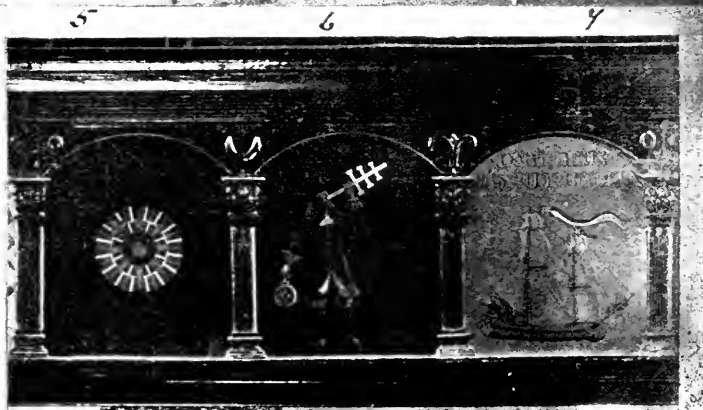


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The Guildry Panels.



Of the four panels belonging to the Guildry — Nos. 7, 8, 9, 10, South side—No. 7 denotes the year in which their charter of incorporation came into practice. No. 8 indicates the date of an undertaking with the Kirk Session and Prime Guild regarding the frontage; the difference in the style of lettering and ornament is ample proof of their having been executed at these dates. Both these panels were restored for the late Mr John Gilchrist Cunningham, 2 Gladstone Terrace. No. 9, restored for Provost D. J. Balfour Kirke, is part of the Gildrie arms; and No. 10, restored for the family of the late Mr William Crow, represents their “mysterious figure four,” about which there has been a good deal of speculation. It was used by the merchants in Stirling and elsewhere, and may be seen on a tombstone at Crail, and on one in Burntisland Kirkyard. In the latter case it appears correctly, as in the Stirling seal, that is a Roman figure four reversed. The figure is supposed to have been used in early times by the original “four burghs” exclusively. These were Edinburgh, Stirling, Berwick, and Roxburgh, the “court” of which disappeared by Act of Parliament in 1469. The date 1733 commemorates the year in which the Guildry would first enjoy the Act passed in 1732 by which fourteen of their members were to have seats on the Town Council and to monopolise the Magistracy.



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The Prime Gild Society still exists, and is known to have been in operation in 1605, but it must have existed at a much earlier date, considering the trade with foreign ports known to have been proceeding with great vigour for 70 years before. In a copy of rules printed in 1845, membership was confined to shipmasters, sailors, shipowners, and carpenters of sober habits, and under 40 years. There was a pension at the age of sixty, according to the entry-money and annual payments. A widow received three-fourths of the pension "as long as she remained a widow," and there was nothing against her moral character. There was a boxmaster and two keepers. I have endeavoured to obtain some idea of their early proceedings, but the Society is averse to giving information. Fourteen of the pictures are on panels in front of their lofts, and their papers might have shown when they were painted. I think it probable that no papers exist later than 1845. About that time a fire broke out in the house of the boxmaster, Mr James Morrison, when most, if not all, the property of the Prime Gild was destroyed, including a mortcloth of black velvet with a gold border, which had cost £60.

The Society appears from 1605 very frequently in the Council Books as bond-holders; on one occasion having a bond on the Lammerlaws of 2,500 merks. The name Pryme Gilt is not peculiar to the Burntisland Society, the name being used by

sailors' societies elsewhere. The designation is derived from prymgilt—the first charge, or anchorage, on a ship using a port. Early in the seventeenth century “Saylaris in merchandyce must be men of burrowis,” and had to show their burgess ticket on entering foreign ports. Sir James Marwick says the Convention of Burghs at Cupar in 1578 went further, and enacted that every sailor in merchandise must be a guild brother of the town from which he traded. Foreign merchants could trade only with Free Burghs, and that only wholesale. Colston in his “Guildry” book shows that at Leith “nae ships” could be “fraughted outward nor inwards” but with the knowledge of the Dean of Guild and his Council.

The frontage of the sailor's loft on the east side began at panel 5 and ended at the south-east corner. There are eleven panels, of which eight have pictures. Panel 5, restored for Mrs Harrow, 1 Craighòlm Crescent, in memory of her father, the late Bailie M'Intosh, is a graphic representation of a merchant brig of the seventeenth century, similar to panel 10, but more distinct than it in the details of the hull. The large iron grate on the poop, in which a fire was lit as a beacon, is well defined. The remarks about the early form of Union Jack in panel 10 apply equally to this, which, however, appear to have been executed earlier, if we consider that here *both* masts show the St Andrews Cross. It was illegal to use this

flag on ships (except at the fore), after 1606; it would be more difficult to do so after 1707 when more stringent laws were passed regarding the use of flags.

Panel 6—restored for Miss K. J. Kirke, Hilton, is believed to show in the date of 1602, the erection of this portion of the galleries in that year. As has been seen, though some sittings were arranged for in 1595, a special effort was made to complete the seating in 1602, when this panel began the sailor's loft. (No. 5 was only acquired later, and till then was a temporary panel, having the pilasters but no spandril.) The date 1773 commemorate the year when the decision regarding the proportion of members of the Guildry on the Town Council became operative. The dates were not painted at the same time. 1602 is painted on the bare oak, and the lettering that in use early in the seventeenth century, similar to panel on South Gallery, while 1733 is painted on a thick ground of spirit varnish with the style of lettering in vogue then. In using this date 1733, the same as that on panel 9 South Gallery, it must be remembered that many of the Prime Gilt were also members of the Gildrie, and the Gildrie were the employers of the shipmasters and sailors.

Panel 7—restored for Mr Thos. A. Wallace—is an example of the larger type of war vessel called the carrack, in use from James IV. to the middle

of the seventeenth century. It is intended as a King's ship, as the Royal arms—not the Scottish arms—are emblazoned on the stern. I think it a strong proof of this picture having been painted very early in the seventeenth century that the flags are all St Andrew's Cross. It may be objected that the grounds of the flags are red instead of blue, but the guns are gold, not black. The artist used red and gold for decorative purposes only. The union of crowns in 1603 produced the first form of Union Jack, but there are none here. Mason says the war vessels of those days went into battle "with the banner at the main, the standard on the poop, the national flag on the fore, and with pennons and streamers of vivid colour waving from the yard arms." The wind, seemingly absent below, blows a gale at the mast head. One would think the captain was getting married. The guns in the stern are interesting. At the prow ramps the Scottish lion, and behind this is a mask, thought to represent St Michael, the patron of war. Provost Kirke in a recent lecture thought this vessel might be a picture of the Great Michael built by James IV. The guns do not correspond, but the Great Michael was no doubt the prototype of this.

Panel 8—also restored for Mr Thos. A. Wallace—is a compass designed to show approximately the local difference between the geographic and magnetic north.

Panel 9—restored for Mrs Laurie, Starleyhall, in memory of the late Mr James Taylor of Starleyhall—is a picture of a master mariner of the 17th century. The four-tailed coat, rosettes on shoes, and moustache, might fit into 1670-80. The curious combined cravat and bow at the neck may be seen in Blome's *Encyclopædia*, published about 1680. The nautical instruments are the cross-staff and astrolabe described in panel 3 south side.

Panel 10—restored to the memory of the late Mr John Wishart, for 50 years at Grange, for his children—represents a brig of about the middle of the 17th century. It has the usual spritsail, and the artist has forgotten the helm, but it is extremely interesting from the fact that the flags, with the exception of the St Andrew's Cross at the fore peak, illustrate the first form of Union Jack, and make it certain that the picture was painted after 1606 and before 1707. Three years after the union of the crowns in 1603, the union flag of the St Andrew's Cross and the Cross of St George was ordered to be borne by merchantmen in the main top, with the St Andrew's Cross at the fore, and on the Union of Parliaments in 1707, the proclamation was repeated, and the Union Jack constituted the national flag of Great Britain. Though illegal to use the St Andrew's Cross (except on the fore) on ships after 1606, the date of proclamation, we may infer from its

repetition one hundred years afterwards, that the law was not always obeyed. It was not till 1801 that the representatives of Ireland sat at Westminster, and St Patrick's Cross added to the union flag.

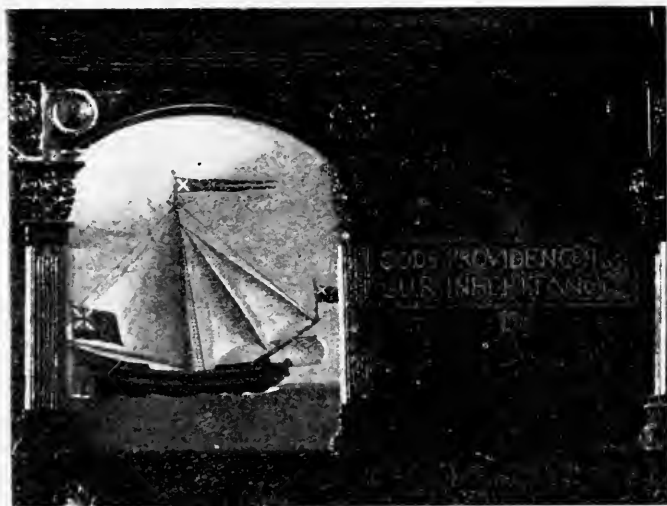
The flag at the main in this picture has been described to me as "a swallow-tailed bird's eye (burgee)." From the translation of Jas. Rodger, M.A., headmaster here, and the suggestion of Mr Allan Rodger, F.E.I.S., Barrhead, the inscription appears to be an adaptation from the *Æneid* when *Æneas* addresses his shipwrecked followers:—

"O socii—neque enim ignavi sumus ante malorum,  
O passi graviora, dabit deus his quoque finem."

"Oh, ye! who have suffered worse evils, God will end even these." The idea supposed to be aimed at by "dabit-deus-his-quo-que-vela" may be "God guides every sail."

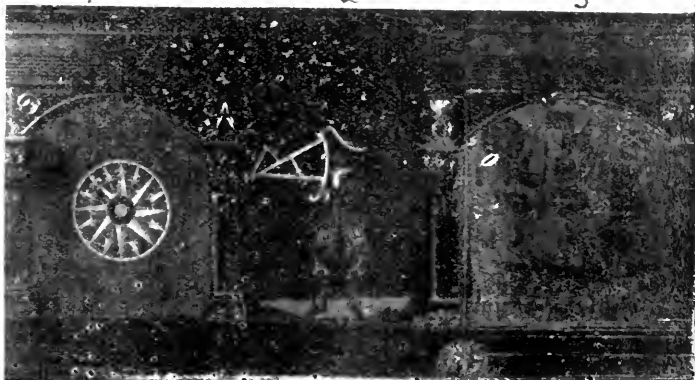
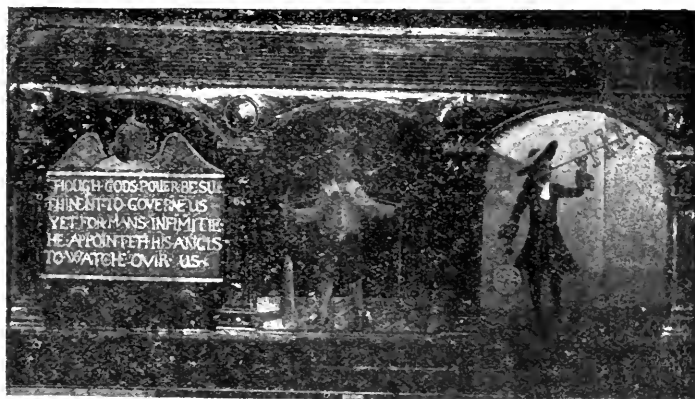
Panel 14—restored for the daughters, step-sons, and step-daughters of the late Mr Alexander Kidd, for many years banker in Burntisland and an elder in the Parish Church—is of a species unknown. From the peculiar form of mainsail it might be a dispatch vessel. From the two St Andrew's Crosses displayed, and the early form of union ensign on the poop, we may conclude that it was painted between 1650 and 1707.





Panels 14 and 15—East Sailors' Gallery.

Panel 15—restored for M. W. Bennet, Craig-holm Crescent, in memory of her father and mother—in the inscription, is the same as that over the door of the sailors' loft, 1679, but the style of letter would point to the panel being earlier. This motto was a favourite in the seventeenth century, and appears on a house in Inverkeithing, and Taylor says "on the front of the plague-protected house at Chester."



South Sailors' Loft.

Panel 1, south sailor's loft—restored for Miss K. J. Kirke, Hilton, in memory of the late Rev. Joseph Sage Finlayson, M.A., for 30 years Parish Church minister—is very quaint and picturesque, and in respect of its theme, beautiful. Before being painted over in 1822 it must have been in a very neglected state, as only a few particles of gold remained on the parts that had been gilded. It may never have been re-gilded from the first, which may, from the lettering, have been in the latter half of the seventeenth century. In the following century churchyard sculpture passed through a Calvinistic gloom of crossed bones, skulls, and skeletons, but here we have affirmed a sure and beautiful hope. The word “suffi-  
hinent” is, of course, “sufficient.”

Panel 2 was restored for Mr J. W. Muir, Sèxton Avenue, Glasgow, in memory of his father and mother. This odd and almost elfish-looking personage seems to breathe of the fore-castle, and may date earlier than the last mentioned, in spite of the buckled shoes. The curious ornament on the front of the waist, round which there is no belt, is not a buckle, but the survival of a frill in which the bodice ended, in a fashion thirty years before buckles became all the go. One of its phases was a bunch of ribbons or lace. The figure is, as sailors say, “fathoming” a rope. Some have thought that this action is intended to draw a parallel between the allotted span of three score and ten, and the seventy-two inches in a fathom—

the amount of rope we may be allowed. The arched rope is ingeniously descriptive of the curve followed by the hand in "fathoming." The rope has been cut, we may suppose, from what appears to be a mooring post. A Dutch naval gentleman has expressed the opinion that the rope ought to be attached to what he says is a lead, and not a mooring paul; his reason being that the chief idea, strongly inculcated in the sailor, was that "the lead is the sailor's paladium." However, a photograph taken when the picture was first uncovered shows no rope there, and the knife is very distinct.

Panel 3 was restored in memory of Mr John Murrie, at one time Provost of Burntisland, and Margaret Murrie, for their daughters Elizabeth Burgoyne, Jessie S. Wilson, Margaret S. Murrie, and Isabella Murrie. The only indication that a picture was on this panel before the removal of many coats of white, grainings, and varnish was a circle low down on the left which was expected to prove the end of a scroll. A high pitch of excitement was attained when this gradually resolved itself into an instrument like an enormous watch held in a man's hand. The interest was if possible intensified when it was found that the man held in his other hand some apparatus equally strange and unheard of. Arguing from the costume the picture could not be much earlier than 1680. But as the instruments, an astrolabe and cross-staff, must have been rarely in use at that time merely mentioned in "Robertson's Naviga-

tion," though well described in Blome's *Encyclopædia*—and the Davis quadrant having been known from the beginning of the 17th century, I conclude that the person who had the panel painted would be some old sea dog, in his "retreat from care and toil," fondly musing on the good old days of his youth. Our Commander with cross-staff and astrolabe—more fortunate than Don Quixote, who in his perilous voyage in the enchanted barque prayed for an "astrolabe to take the elevation of the pole"—appears just to have purchased them and, on the way aboard, is seized with an irresistible desire to test them. I remember seeing an aged golf enthusiast, going to church one Sunday, suddenly stop in the middle of the road, and put himself and his umbrella in a driving attitude.

The cross-staff, or fore-staff, was used for taking altitudes, and consisted of a square rod about three feet long, the sides of which were graduated respectively for ten, thirty, sixty, and ninety degrees. Only one of the cross pieces was used at a time. The staff was held to the right eye by the right hand, while the left slid the cross until one end encountered the horizon and the other sun. The figure, therefore, is very conventional, but it is evident that if the figure is to appear moving from left to right, or to follow the sun, the artist could not have put the staff to the right eye without painting the back of the figure towards us. In all the panels in which the designs are

profile, the motion is directed with the sun, except panel 5 of this loft.

The astrolabe was also for altitude, and was used by the Greeks. It was divided in 360 degrees, though only one part of these were required. It was suspended by the left thumb with the edge turned towards the sun, and the vertical line strictly plumb. The pointer had a sight at each end, and was turned until the shadow of the upper was thrown on the lower, the point of which then marked the degree of altitude.

Panel 4 was restored for Miss Landale, Edinburgh, in memory of her father and mother, Dr and Mrs Landale of the Binn. The compass on this panel is somewhat similar to that on panel 8 east gallery, and there is the same attempt to show the difference necessary to allow for in steering for Burntisland.

Panel 5 was restored for Mrs John Kirke, London, in memory of her father, the late Mr James Shepherd of Rossend Castle. It represents a ship-master taking the altitude of the sun with a Davis quadrant. With the exception of the shoe buckles, the costume is previous to 1680. The ribbons at the knee are much earlier. I suggest that shoe buckles may have been used at sea before the fashion came in on land. Observe the brim of the hat turned up to allow of using the quadrant. There is a hat in the navy at present very like this in the front, and perhaps originating

from it. As already pointed out the ships and men in profile on these panels are all going with the sun, except this one, and it is interesting to find that this figure has the back turned to the sun *intentionally*. In using the Davis quadrant—employed from 1594 to 1740, when it was supplanted by Hadley's—it was necessary to turn the back to the sun. One hand slid the Vane on the arc of the upper sector until a beam of sunlight from behind, passing through a hole in the Vane, struck a slit in another Vane at the point. This Vane is upright in the picture, but should be horizontal. There was a slit in it so that the horizon might be kept in view through it, and the perforated Vane at the observer's eye. When the horizon was visible through, and the beam of sunlight struck the Vane at the point simultaneously, the altitude of the sun was found in the sum of the under portions of the two arcs, which were graduated respectively 60 and 25 degrees. I am indebted to Mr J. Bolam, Leith Nautical College, for an understanding of this instrument.

Panel 6 has already been described at page 173, and panels 7, 8, 9, 10, at page 168.



Combined insignia of the Smiths, Wrights, and Masons,  
painted on the destruction of the North Gallery.



The earliest entry in the "Hammerman's book"—1648—is near the middle. The intention may have been to collect their earlier proceedings from scattered papers and place them in the front pages. From this entry it may be gathered that the Society had been in existence long before. It is difficult to decipher, but appears to be a fine of 40s to be imposed on members working under certain circumstances; the fine to go to the "box." " . . . ordained be ye haill members of ye hammermen yt nane of," . . . and concludes "In presents of God to stand be subservit with our hands upon ye twentie fyve of December 1648." The signatures, initials or marks of 44 persons follow. Only two are unable to write, six use initials, the remainder written in full are equal to the average writing of the present day, and several are particularly fine.

The Society laid the usual stress on the defence of its members from the outlander, who persisted in coming in and offering his inferior (?) services at a lower rate. But it also provided for the members' widows, sickness, and poverty. New members were always "admitted fremen to all ye libertie and privileges of our seat and box" (1663.) The cost of admission varied from five pounds to twenty-four pounds Scots (in 1833 it was £10 sterling) "according to paction." The rearing of apprentices was a chief item. These were nearly always sons of members. On one occasion this rule was tested by a baker's son, but he was

rejected. At another time a stranger wright was admitted "frieman" at the fees expected from a son, on account of having married a "frieman's" daughter. Each apprentice paid on joining 14s (increased latterly to 40s), and after serving five years, paid what was termed "the gurnie (journey) money"—a grand excuse for a blow out.

There is some confusion in the designation "Hammermen." The arms behind their seats are those of the hammermen, or smiths—hammer and crown; the wrights, square and compass; and the masons, castle and compass. In the whole book, 1648—1739, there are only three "measons" or "mesons" mentioned, one cooper, and one "plumer and glasier." The remainder are smiths and wrights. The money was termed the "hammermen's box" up to 1683 when the Society was incorporated. On October 18th, 1684, "ye deacons hev given this day to ye Town Clerk seventeen pounds Scots ye hammermen and wrights sealle of cause qlk wes this day put in the box." In the Council Records, 1683, a "sealle of cause" is granted to the wrights and one to the hammermen. Originally choosing one deacon they now chose one from the smiths and one from the wrights, and their box was now called the smith and wrights' box. So that while incorporated separately the societies elected to use the same rules, box, and church seat.

The joint Society met once a quarter at the house of the boxmaster to make the subscription, and in September books were balanced "to presiding deat." There were then chosen two deacons, a boxmaster, men to hold the keys of the box, a keeper for the "cists for the mortcloaths," and a person to whom was given the custody of the book. There were a "silver box" and a "paper box," with three keys for the one and two for the other. In 1681 there were four mortcloths, "two of velvet and two of cloth seall." Some of these mortcloths were not to be sniffed at. In 1711 "bought 9 els of velvet with five pounds and ane unce of black silk for a fring. Seven els and ane half fine black silk serg for the linin, and seven unces and four drops of more black silk to compleat the soeing: total an hundred and fifty ane pounds eightin shillin Scots mouney." These mortcloths let out to the general public were a good source of revenue.

Like the other Societies, the Hammermen let such sittings as they did not require to outsiders. In 1731 " . . . let their loft (a seat in) belonging to their treds to John Dickson, barber, for thrie shillings strling money." The last member of the joint Society was David Arnot, a blacksmith, who disposed of the seats to the Kirk Session about the year 1860 for £50. He had received one instalment of £5 when he died. In any case, he could not have conveyed the seats to

anyone. His daughter, Mrs Henderson, possesses a flag of the Hammermen dated 1832.

The joint Societies were prosperous in the first half of the 18th century. In 1704 they purchased a house and “yaird” from John Kirkland, shoemaker, for £47. In 1728 they possessed “apis of ground est sid of ye Kirk called ye louping diks,” which they let out. In 1737 “David Renton paid ye crofts rent.” They had good sums lent on bond, and at the same time borrowed money, let us hope at a lower rate than they lent it. On one occasion they lent a “Talyeor” £9 to get him out of the Tolbooth.

That masons were eligible, and yet only three were members in about one hundred years, shows how few were permanently resident. The masons hailed from large centres, and were members of the masons’ Societies there. They moved in a gipsy fashion from place to place as work was projected, usually building huts to live in, round the work in progress, and taking the road again on its completion.

Little is known of the cordiners. The plan, page 132, shows their seat (3) described on page 141. Their arms—similar to that of the craft in Edinburgh—are on the wall at the end of their seat.

The cordiners’, or shoemakers’, seal of cause, of which a part is here shown in *facsimile*, was granted by the Town Council in 1683. The



The Cordiners' Arms.

following is a rough reading of it:—"Sealle of Cause in favour of ye cordiners. To all and sundrie whom it . . . Michael Setoun, baillie of ye Burgh of Bruntiland, Alexander Orrock, Walter Adams, William Moyes, James Gardiner, William Mitchelson, John Crawford, Andrew Robinson, John Orrok, William Blankiter, James Anderson, John Young, George Walkethusent, counselors of this Burgh Greeting in God everlasting. We make it knowne that there did compeir befoir us, we being then sitting in judgment, John Young cordiner Burges of this Burgh,



and accompanied wt ye best and worthiest of ye heall cordiner traid, wha presented ane bill and supplication together wt certaine propositions and articles," and goes on to lay down that in future all shoemakers and tanners in the burgh must be burgesses, pay into the box for their own poor, must have no work done by any "outlandman or unfreeman," and bring up its apprentices under explicit rules regarding their "meat and drink," years of service, etc.

*The Tailycors.*

Mrs M'Omish remembers a picture of a pair of "shears" on a panel of the tailor's loft. At Crail the tailors had a good many lines of rhyne on the front of their loft. One of the lines ran:—

"Were it not for tailors we might all naked go."

It was due to the neglect of the Burntisland tailors to keep their gallery in a state of repair that the carved oak front there was removed, and a white wood oak grained front substituted. They let out their seats, and every Michaelmas, when they drew their rents, they had a great spree. St Michael was their patron Saint, some say, but Dr James Gammack holds it was was St Goodman. I fear they would require at these times, the assistance of St Martin. These periodical bouts kept them short of cash, and the seats fell into a serious state of disrepair. The Session called on them to put things right, and advanced them money for the purpose, the interest on which they were un-

able to meet; on which the seats came into the hands of the Session some time after 1822. About one hundred years before—1727—a “William Brand, Talyeor,” caused a sensation in the burgh. While drinking in the company of three men of other crafts, he sold to them “ye Talyeors seat in ye Kirk for ane hundred rix dollars.” The Tailors’ Society petitioned the Town Council, who overturned the bargain, and fined “ilk ane” of the prisoners “twentie pundis Scots.”

The late Mr William Melville was the last box-master, but the box cannot now be traced.



The Weavers' Box.



*The Weavers.*

This is the only one of the societies whose box still exists. It contains many old documents of the craft, and is in the possession of Councillor Stevenson, whose father received it from the last of the weavers. It is by the courtesy of Councillor Stevenson that I am able to present the above picture of this interesting relic of by-gone days. Mary Somerville describes the weavers' seat, noticed at page 141, as having over it a picture of a shuttle with the inscription—"Life is swifter than a weaver's shuttle and is spent without hop Job."

*The Baxters and Fleshers.*

Little is known of these bodies. Mary Somerville writes of the Baxters' seat as having a "sheaf of wheat painted on the front." This panel, it is hoped, may yet be discovered. There is a notice of the Fleshers' seat at page 141.

*The Maltmen.*

Of the three Guilds never incorporated—the Prymgilt, Hirers, and Maltmen—the first has already been noticed. In the report of the Commissioners to the Municipal Corporations of Scotland in 1833 it is stated that the Maltmen in 1608 were allowed by the Council to have a box and a "mutual band" and to levy a certain sum for each boll of malt that was made for the support of their poor.

*The Hirers.*

The Hirers, like the Maltmen, were a numerous body. A postmaster was first chosen in 1609 in connection with the imposition of a 5 per cent. tax on their drawings, called postsilver. Twelve years afterwards the Postmaster General for Scotland complained to the Privy Council that Burntisland and Kinghorn were "posting on their own account, and infringing his patent." In 1674 the pest of Sabbath breaking appears to have been specially virulent. It was kept up by people from Edinburgh crossing, and taking a day in the country on horseback. The wicked Newhaven boatmen started it by landing passengers on the "Saboth . . . . Ordaines no boats cross without advertising the minister or magistrates," nor any "Hyrrer" to hire out his horse under penalties. The postmaster and others were admonished. But nothing would stop it. So a virtue was made of necessity, and liberty practically granted on payment of a sufficient fine. On one occasion the minister reports "fortie shillings Scotts received from D. Burnes, skipper, for breach of the Sabbath."

## CHAPTER XIV.

## ECCLESIASTICAL.

The worthy burgesses of Burntisland were from the first in a chronic state of discontent about the ministry—praying for a minister at all costs, objecting to his being placed, or scheming to bring about his dismissal. At the Reformation in 1558 only a few of the Roman priests became Protestant, and for many years there was a scarcity of ministers. It was not until 1593, on the establishment of Presbyterianism, that the first Protestant minister was settled at Burntisland, the Church being still at the Kirkton. His name cannot be found from the Session Records in Burntisland, as these begin later, but William Watson was minister on the King's visit to the General Assembly. For an account of this visit we have to be content with what Speed gives as a quotation from the Council Records. A repeated search failed to reveal this entry, and I think it must be from such of the *Session* Records as are now in Edinburgh:—"Apud Bruntiland testio Mch, 1601. The baillies and Counsall quhais names follow, viz.: . . . being convenit togidder in Counsall ordaines ane convenient house to be provided for ye convention of ye ministrie with his magisty and his commissioners to be hal-

den wtin ye Burgh on ye tent day of Mch instant, and ordains cuils to be providit to serve for fyre for ye said house, and all in ane voice thinks Andro Wilson his lodging most convenient for yt purpose . . .” Andro Wilson was the Town Clerk, and his house was at the South Hill. This house would merely be used as a refreshment place for the ministers, the convention being held in the new church, a few steps distant. As has been seen in Chapter III., the King had visited Burntisland Castle on more than one occasion, and was very partial to the Melvilles, so that it is more than probable he chose to be entertained there again during the several days he passed at Burntisland at this time.” In Calderwood’s “History of the Church of Scotland,” there appears the following:—“But because the King had fallen from his horse and hurt his left shoulder, it (the Assembly) was appointed to be holden at Bruntisland the 12th of May (1601) whereupon sundrie were disappointed.”

The eyes of the sincerer sort were upon Mr *Patrick Thomson*, who was in leets with *Patrick Galloway* & others. The King would needs have the leets changed, and a neutral man chosen. So Mr *John Hall* was chosen, not a neutral man, but a secret advanter of the King’s course.

A letter which Mr *James Melvine* sent to be read to the Assemblie, the King taketh out of the Moderator’s hand, & suffered it not to be read, but putteth it up in his pocket.” . . .

“ In the *last* Session (of Assembly) it was meant by sundrie of the Brethren, that there were sundrie errors in the vulgar translation of the Bible, and of the Psalms in meeter, which required correcting, etc.” “It was therefore concluded, that for the translation of the Bible, every one of the Brethren, who had greatest skill in the languages, employ their travels, in sundrie parts of the vulgar translation of the Bible, which need to be amended, and to confer the same together at the next Assemblie.”

The King was present at this “*last* Session,” and made a speech, but does not appear, according to Calderwood, to have made any reference to the proposed new translation.

The “gift” from the King of 500 merks per annum, for the minister’s salary, was apparently gone into again on this visit, the Council supplementing it in March, 1602, by £200 Scots.

This William Watson, according to the Privy Council Records, was one of the eight Presbyterian ministers from Scotland who met in conference with the King at Greenwich in August 1606, on the question of Episcopacy which was reintroduced in 1610. Mr Watson held tenaciously to Presbytery, and after a great deal of trouble was, in 1615, removed from his charge and warned never again to appear within eight miles of Burntisland.

The heritors, until 1632, refused to pay their part of the minister’s stipend, except he officiated

occasionally at the Kirkton; and the manse was there till 1657, when a new one was provided in the town of the yearly value of £35. That at the Kirkton was said to be worth £60.

In 1638 came the Covenant, which many of the inhabitants of Burntisland signed "with tearis of great joy," but the minister, John Mitchelson, would not sign, and refused to read it in the Church, or allow it to be signed there. It was ultimately read by the church "docter," and Mitchelson deposed.

In 1660 the minister was confined in Edinburgh Castle, and the town was making repeated applications for his release. In an entry in the Session Records of August 28, there occurs the expression "our own minister Mr George Nairne being restrained and keeped in the Castell of Edr." The following may be seen in Lamont's Diary under date June 1670—"Mr George Nairne, late M. att Bruntillande depairted out of this life att Finglassie in Fyffe . . ." But the services kept up well at this time, and on one Sunday in 1662, Speed states that a collection at the church door, for the repairs of Peterhead harbour, amounted to 53 lbs." Episcopacy was being strongly pressed under Lauderdale and Rothes, and shepherdless flocks met in private houses, or in the country, to hear what was forbidden in the church. Speed says, under date 1677, "for many years there were unsuccessful attempts to get a minister." Lauderdale had just sent strict orders to the

Council to prosecute all frequenters of Conventicles.

The minister in 1689 was a Mr Johnstone, an Episcopalian, and in that year Bailie Seton was pulled up because £84 paid to him for meat and drink to the minister" had been used by him for "a stand of colours for the town's militia." William of Orange, while again establishing Presbytery in Scotland, refused to allow the Episcopalians to be deprived of their charges, except something could be brought against their moral character. So, in 1690, "the pretended minister of Burntisland," Mr Johnstone, was suspended. But there were those in the town who resented this fiercely. When a Mr Shepherd was sent by the Presbytery to preach in his place "he found Mr Johnstone in the pulpit and the men of the congregation armed with staves, and he was forced to conduct his service at the Castle. It has been stated that Johnstone was restored by the influence of the King, but this lacks confirmation. However this was, the Session Records show that Mr James Inglis, also an Episcopalian, was admitted in 1693, and that the amount of dissatisfaction with Episcopacy led to his deposition in 1699. All this appears strange when we read that the Prince of Orange abolished patronage. There was, however, an important condition. If the patron—in the case of Burntisland the Crown—had built or sustained the Church it was necessary to pay him 600 merks. Burntisland was entitled to a grant

of 500 merks annually for the minister's stipend. The town could barely afford to drop this Crown grant.

I am indebted for the following condensed account of a religious riot, to Mr John Blyth, Kirkton, who made a complete extract of it from such of the Session Records as are in Edinburgh—In 1711 a Mr Cleghorn was minister. In 1712, after his translation to Wemyss, Mr Ebenezer Erskine, afterwards founder of the Secession Church, "was called, but Mr William Duguid, licensed by the Presbytery in 1710, was also called, and obtained in addition a presentation from Queen Anne," who had fully restored patronage. To meet the difficulty, the General Assembly bluntly "declared his (Duguid's) license null and void, and presented a memorial to Her Majesty through John Duke of Athol." During the sitting of the Assembly, Mr Russell of Kennoway was sent by the Synod to preach at Burntisland. On landing at the pier "he was opposed in a very tumultuous manner by a mob," who laid hands on him and tried to get him to mount a horse they had ready for him, and leave the town "by the back side." He refused, and attempted to delay matters by begging "libertie to get a drink of ale." He must have dispatched a messenger for assistance when in the tavern, as "immediately after his asking a blessing" the crowd came and pulled him out again. Shortly afterwards "Baillie Thaland came up and took him by the hand,



promising to protect him," but immediately "the rabble, gripping both, made them part hands, and gript the Bailie making his hat go one way and his wig another." At this time "Mr Colin Mackenzie, Rossend, and Bailie Anderson, came up and Mr Russell appealed to them to protect him. But they, using big words, did ask him how he could come there to occasion such a rabble. He answered he came by the authority of his Master, the Lord Jesus Christ, by appointment of the Synod of Fife. They replied, "Begone, sir," and desired him to mount his horse and prevent the effusion of blood. This Mr Russell did. This Duguid was said to be a Jacobite, and Burntisland at that time reputed to be ruled by Jacobites.

Two years later, in 1714, I find the Council warning the Presbytery that King George was now their patron, and refusing to recognise their nominees. It was not till 1719 a minister was obtained, who, at first, seemed likely to be acceptable to both parties—the Rev. James Thomson. He remained till 1737 when he joined the Seceders. He had refused to read from the pulpit a proclamation for the discovery of the murderers of Porteous, Captain of the City Guard of Edinburgh. "James Thomson, minister of the Gospel" appears frequently and at great length in the Council Records, and prosecuted several law cases with great vigour. One of these was about a ruinous house on which he had, out of

kindness, advanced money to William Ged. The house was on the "North side of the High Street, fronting the Midgate" (the present Kirkgate, or a vennel then existing between Kirkgate and Cockle Wynd). On Ged's death the house fell into Mr Thomson's hands, when he was asked by the Council to render it habitable. This he, at first and for long, refused to do "for all the King's horses and all the King's men."

Sheriff Mackay portrays Fife as the nursery of Secession. The Cameronians originated with Richard Cameron, a native of Falkland. The Seceders, under Ebenezer Erskine, very soon divided into Burghers and anti-Burghers, and again into Auld Lights and New Lights. There was the Relief Church arising in Dunfermline. The Sandemanians owed their existence to Glas, son of a minister of Auchtermuchty. The Bereans too, thrived in Fife, and the Catholic Apostolic Church was founded by Edward Irving, sometime schoolmaster in Kirkealdy.

After the Secession the Church in Burntisland entered on a long period of peace. The Rev. Robert Spears was appointed in 1743, and laboured for 36 years with great acceptance. The Rev. James Wemyss followed in 1779, ministering for 43 years.

This welcome calm continued till the arrival of Dr Couper in 1834, the beginning of the "ten years' conflict." Dr Couper "came out" in 1843,

and brought nearly all the members with him. A church was built for him, at the very door of the Parish Church, by Robert Young of the Grange. Of the handful left "behind" in the Parish Church, not even *one* would go to hear the newly-appointed minister. He was accused of everything bad, even playing "bools" in the Kirk passages. However, he continued for some considerable time to deliver his sermons to the Beadle and Precentor.

Hard as the people were to please with a minister yet difficulty was found in paying his stipend. It was often in arrears. This stinginess may have led the minister in 1684 to "demand the tiend of fish." The Council went in a flutter about this to the Archbishop of St Andrews, and were greatly relieved to find that the Archbishop was not at the bottom of the proposal, and emphatically refused to countenance it. Impecuniosity abounded. This was not the only case of the "cat licking the dowie's mouth." In 1674 the town's officers—part of whose duties was to show people into the pews on Sunday, for which they were promised a share in the collections, had received nothing for some time—were constrained dramatically to bring themselves to public recollection by taking a collection on their own account.

After the trials of the Commonwealth the Session had much trouble with law-breakers of

various sorts. They instituted what were called searchers, and reports were made weekly of the state of morals. "Vaging" the fields, the Castle Brae, or the "Shoar" were forbidden. So were toasting bread and bringing water on Sunday. One pint of water was allowed. Hiring horses or carrying passengers by the Ferry on Sunday were subject to forfeiture of the horses or boats, but were by and by suffered, under supervision, on payment of considerable fines, which were given to the poor. A very strong breath of freedom must have been blowing through "society" at this time. Conciliatory measures seemed a waste of good temper, and the Council became so alarmed at this "progress of an age of reason" that they held a special meeting and "declared they would see the Act" as regards the Sabbath put in force "within the Cité," and warned all against "frequenting ale houses or taverns." Those absent from the Kirk without a "lawful excuse" were fined 5s, and "anyone brewing upon ye Saboth nycht at even sall pay 6s 8d." About 1670 the Tuesday's sermon and sometimes the Wednesday's preaching are mentioned. Catechisings of particular persons took place nearly every week day, and all appeared in rotation on Sundays for that purpose.

In 1673 Barbara Thaland appeared before the pulpit and confessed to having indulged in the luxury of "flyting," to the hurt of her neighbours, "craved God's forgiveness, and promised not to do

the lyke again." That required a lot of courage. We lift our hat. Due to the spread of disease in 1684 the Session and Council prohibited all persons from attending "lykewalks of dead corpses," and in 1689 no person was allowed to go to the house of a deceased person nor "eat, drink, nor smoke tobacco before a funeral."

Witches, too, played the mischief with church and town. As early as 1598 Robert Brown accused Janet Allan of causing the death of his son by witchcraft. She was tried by the town's jury of 15, found guilty, and sentenced to be "brunt quick." She must have been pardoned, as shortly after she is accused of another death, and again sentenced. Lamont says in 1649:—"This summer there were very many witch taken and brunt in seuerall parts of this Kingdom, as in Lothian and Fyffe, viz., in Enderkething, Aberdoure, Bruntillande, Deysert, Dunfermling." A very remarkable case occurred in 1673, recorded in the Session Records now in the Register House. The case is very voluminous, but a long extract has been made by Mr John Blyth, Kirkton, who has been kind enough to allow me to take from it the following very condensed account:—

Elsbeth Finlay appeared before the Session and confessed in great detail to having seen the "devill in bodilie shape, on a moonlight night, when she was going for a pynte of aill" for the Town Clerk, to whom she was a servant. She appears to have resented the tricks and practical jokes of

another curious female (Margaret Couper), and Elspeth's stories about her are calculated to prove her friendly with Satan. She said Margaret Couper accosted her, when out for the usual aill, and bade her steal widow Baine's bairn's snood off his head, and thereafter swear that Jon Moncrieff's wife gave her it. On another occasion at night she was following the crowd which was marching with the "pype and drum," when she lost her shoe in the sand, and, searching for it, saw "Margaret Couper, at Jon Halkston's well, who came up to her, took her by the hand, and brought her to the Devil." She saw "ye foule theefe standing at ye barn doer like ane high man, and higher, with black cloathes, and a blew bonnet." . . . He and Margaret went a little distance from her "till a consultation." "Margaret then took out a little black cuttie spoon" and poured a spoonful of water on the middle finger of Elspeth's left hand, and while this rite was taking up her attention the "foule theefe" suddenly "laid his hands heavy and cold as iron on hers." With that she fell, got up again, but she could not speak, and her legs almost failed her. Margaret Couper said "sillie facile thing," and laughed along with the devil. Again, Margaret Couper took her to her house one night and went through some eerie encantations. She lighted a little stick which she took from a "mugg with brimston . . . that blented, blented with a blew low," etc. The Devil then appeared again,

“white” this time “except his face and hands.” She made a great to do, and did not know how she got out of the house; but she saw him again “all in black at ye cheik of ye door,” and as she staggered on the way home to the Town Clerk’s she passed the “foule theeife again all in black on the top of the crag.” Her legs failed her, and she foundered going up her master’s stair. The Clerk must have been “dry,” and would probably not observe (if there was any of his “pynte of aill” left after these athletics) that it was mulled and strongly sulphurous.

It seems the ministers of Burntisland and Kinghorn were acknowledged authorities in the now lost art of witch-finding. The Kinghorn minister is described as having been an absolute terror to the wretched creatures who appeared before him. This appears to have been due to the fact that, somewhat like Willie Wastel’s wife, of whom Burns wrote “she had an e’e, she had but ane, the cat had twa the very colour,” he had a black mask over one eye which gave to the other, though not situated like Cyclop’s in the centre of the forehead, an uncanny and prodigious penetration. This time he met his match. Meeting after meeting was held over these two hussies without their judges being able to decide which was telling the truth. They were completely baffled. Elspeth had the better of them all. She appears never to have forgiven Margaret

for frightening her, and especially for calling her a "silly facile thing."

In all, from the year 1563 to 1722 there are figures to show that in Scotland alone over 4000 persons were burned for practising witchcraft. Thirty were burned on the Castle Hill of Edinburgh on account of their supposed attempt to persuade the Devil to raise a storm to destroy the ship in which James VI. was bringing home his Danish bride. Dangerous as the reputation for having dealings with Satan was, it seems strange that in many cases women so accused seemed rather to enjoy the charge; stranger still, to us, that most ministers should have been strong believers in it. Even to a late period the belief held on. When the Statutes against witchcraft were repealed in 1735 a section of the Seceders were greatly offended, and made efforts to show in an Act of Presbytery in 1743 that this repeal was contrary to the express law of God, "thou shalt not suffer a witch to live."

If there are any stray magicians left, no Government is bold enough to burn them, or even to heap coals of fire on their head by feeding them. One thing is certain, we may safely go abroad o' nights, the present fashion in skirts making aerial excursions astride broomsticks impossible.



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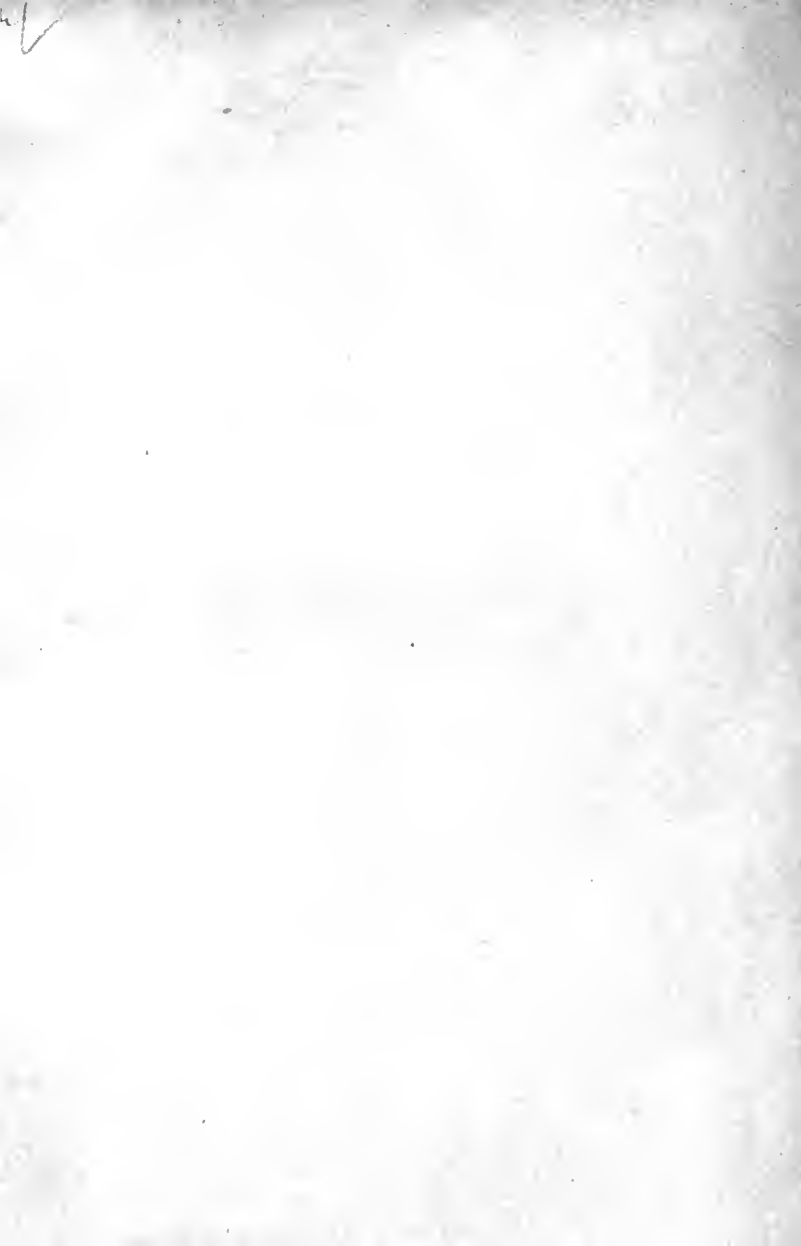
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